J S Rumsey
Chicago

WITHDRAWN
UTSA Libraries

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/jerusalemdeliver0000jhwi

R. Morghen.

Bianchi

Tasso

THE

JERUSALEM DELIVERED

OF

TORQUATO TASSO.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH SPENSERIAN VERSE WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

By J. H. WIFFEN

NEW EDITION.

WITH TWENTY-FOUR ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD BY THURSTON, AND EIGHT ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL.

LONDON:
BELL & DALDY, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1872.

LONDON : PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

TO

GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF BEDFORD.

I.

Years have flown o'er since first my soul aspired
In song the sacred Missal to repeat,
Which sainted Tasso writ with pen inspired,—
Told is my rosary, and the task complete:
And now, 'twixt hope and fear, with toil untired,
I cast the' ambrosial relique at thy feet;
Not without faith that in thy goodness thou
Wilt deign one smile to my accomplished vow.

II.

Not in dim dungeons to the clank of chains,
Like sad Torquato's, have the hours been spent
Given to the song, but in bright halls where reigns
Uncumbered Freedom,—with a mind unbent
By walks in woods, green dells, and pastoral plains,
To sound, far-off, of village merriment;
Albeit, perchance, some springs whence Tasso drew
His sweetest tones, have touched my spirit too.

III.

Oh that, as happier constellations bless
My studious life, my verses too could boast
Some happier graces (*should* I wish for less?)
To' atone for charms unseized and splendours lost!—
No! the rich rainbow mocks the child's caress,
Who can but sorrow, as his fancy 's crossed,
That e'er so beautiful a thing should rise,
To' elude his grasp, yet so enchant his eyes.

IV.

On the majestic Sorrentine I gazed
With a familiar joy—methought he smiled;
But now the vigil 's past, I stand amazed
At the conceit, and sorrow like the child.
What second hand *can* paint the scenes that blazed
In Tasso's brain, with tints as sweet and wild?
As much the shapes that on his canvass glow,
Their birth to Frenzy as to Genius owe.

V.

Yet may I hope o'er generous minds to cast
A faint reflection of his matchless skill,
For here his own Sophronia, unaghast,
Flings firm defiance to her tyrant still;—
Clorinda bleeds; lovelorn Erminia fast
Hies through the forest at her steed's wild will;
And in these pages still Armidá's charms
Strike the rapt heart, and wake a world to arms.

VI.

Thus then, O Lady, with thy name I grace
The glorious fable; fitly, since to thee
And thine the thanks are due, that in the face
Of time and toil, the Poet's devotee
Has raised the' enchanted structure on its base,
And to thy hand now yields the' unclosing key,—
Blest, if in one bright intellect like thine,
He wins regard, and builds himself a shrine!

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

In at length presenting to the Public a complete Translation of the "Gerusalemme Liberata," I have the satisfaction of expressing my gratitude both for the flattering manner in which my published Specimen was received, and for the encouraging requests which reached me, from various quarters, for a continuance of the version. I needed, perhaps, no other inducement to proceed than the pleasure attendant on the pursuit; but it would be folly to deny that these solicitations, coming as they did from writers of established reputation, greatly contributed to cherish my ambition, and to endue me with the perseverance necessary to accomplish a task confessedly both difficult and daring.

Yet it is with nothing like presumption on the public favour that I now submit my labours to the public eye. Some indulgence I might consider as my due, from the arduous nature of the attempt, and the desire which it implies to add to others' gratification; but as it is no uncommon thing to find such considerations lost sight of, and such claims denied, I abandon them without plea to the mercy of the world. The severest critic will probably not be able to point out, or even discover in the performance so many defects and inequalities as I myself am sensible of; for what author or artist ever succeeded in executing to the life the ideal beauty of the image in his mind? yet do I not so far discredit that secret instinct of nature which first led me to Tasso's pages, as to imagine that I shall ever have cause to regret having engaged in the undertaking. Those who are personally acquainted with me, know how wholly I have given myself to the task: I have studied the old masters of English poetry, their phraseology and flow of verse; I have endeavoured to follow the maxim of Roscommon, "to write with fervour and correct with phlegm:"—of the earlier Cantos, no less than two-thirds have been entirely re-written;—and whether I succeed or fail in attaining that reward of high exertion which Milton once ventured to whisper in the ear of Diodati, I have at least the satisfaction of knowing that I have in all points laboured to deserve it.

I do not deem it necessary here to discuss the merits or demerits of former translators. To the idolaters of Fairfax alone I would observe, that the beauties scattered over his spirited translation can never, notwithstanding his frequent absurdities, cease to find an echo in the heart and admiration of all who are capable of distinguishing and relishing what is good and excellent in poetry; but to assert, as some have done, that Fairfax never deviates from Tasso but to add some new grace to what is already graceful, never interweaves fresh images but to shed beauty over the original, never once adapts his own original thoughts to his author but with congruity and elegance, is an absurdity too notoriously incorrect to need a single observation.

Had I employed, as Mr. Rose has done in his excellent translation of Ariosto, the same measure as the original, I might have followed the steps of my author with the most scrupulous exactness, and have

constructed my verse with infinitely more facility: but the Spenserian stanza presented such superior advantages in point of variety, harmony, and adaptation to the sublime and solemn march, the spirit and the genius of Tasso, that, as I before stated, I had no hesitation in selecting it as the best possible measure for the purpose. I am happy to find that this choice has met with general approbation: and, indeed, the farther I advanced, the greater occasion I found to rejoice in my decision. I at first introduced in my Specimen some antique words which had been sanctioned by Spenser and the poets of his age, but these I have since rejected: a very few may still perhaps be found, introduced where I had need of them, but as they accord with what Beattie calls the Gothic structure of the stanza, and as such, were occasionally used by him with advantage, I do not see occasion to apologise for the admission.

The Life prefixed to the Poem will, I trust, be found to shed some additional lights on the subject of Tasso's love for the Princess Leonora. Materials for this memoir were so abundant, that the greatest difficulty was to select and to compress. The biographical work of Manso was, it is well known, written some years after the poet's death; and having known Tasso only in the last years of his life, his accounts of the early and most interesting portion of it are often exaggerated and without foundation. It seemed preferable, therefore, to follow in the main the details of Serassi, whose volume bears throughout marks of the greatest research, and who had at his command a vast number of original and unedited documents. Dr. Black, however, in his elegant and elaborate life, whilst deriving from this source the bulk of his materials, has greatly elucidated some points which were left obscure by Serassi, and in particular, the history of that malady of mind with which the poet was afflicted. I have accordingly made an equal use of the English as of the Italian author, weighing well, however, the statements of both on the long controverted questions of the poet's love and imprisonment. I had soon cause to acknowledge, in the evident disguises which Serassi casts over Tasso's attachment, the justice of Dr. Black's observation, "that his country, his profession, his prejudices, his fears, and perhaps his hopes, all took from the Abbé that liberty of mind, without which it was impossible to elucidate the truth." Nothing, in fact, is more apparent than that the truth has been concealed by him. Though avowedly sensible of this, the Doctor's opinions on the point are coloured more deeply than one would expect by the Abbé's representations. I was satisfied with neither; but having been recommended by the Sig. Foscoló to introduce translations of Tasso's lyric poetry, a superior edition of which he was so obliging as to lend me, I found in the poet's verses to Leonora, passages that seemed greatly to elucidate the subject, and I have accordingly drawn largely from this interesting source of information. The conclusions which I formed from these passages were afterwards greatly confirmed by a perusal of Ginguené, in whom I discovered a singular unison of sentiment, both with regard to Serassi's disingenuousness, and the poet's ardent passion. With his arguments, accordingly, I have

strengthened my own, citing, however, in a number of translated verses, proofs which even Ginguené seems wholly to have overlooked.

The List which I have formed of English Crusaders will be interesting to the antiquary. For a few of the names, I have been indebted to J. C. Sneyd Kynnersley, Esq., St. John's College, Cambridge, and for a few to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, and other descendants of crusading families; but the mass have been gleaned from a patient perusal of monkish annals. It is much to be regretted, that of the thousands who assumed the Cross in England, so few have been recorded by our old chroniclers. In consulting, however, the MSS. in the Ashmolean Museum, I was so fortunate as to find a list of those who accompanied King Richard*, which made a considerable addition to their number; others, which may have escaped my own research, will perhaps be furnished by those who are more deeply read in county histories, in genealogy, and heraldry, and who may derive gratification from this first attempt to chronicle the names of those who, crowding from the English shores, participated in the fame of Duke Robert or Cœur de Lion, of Prince Edward, or of Salisbury.

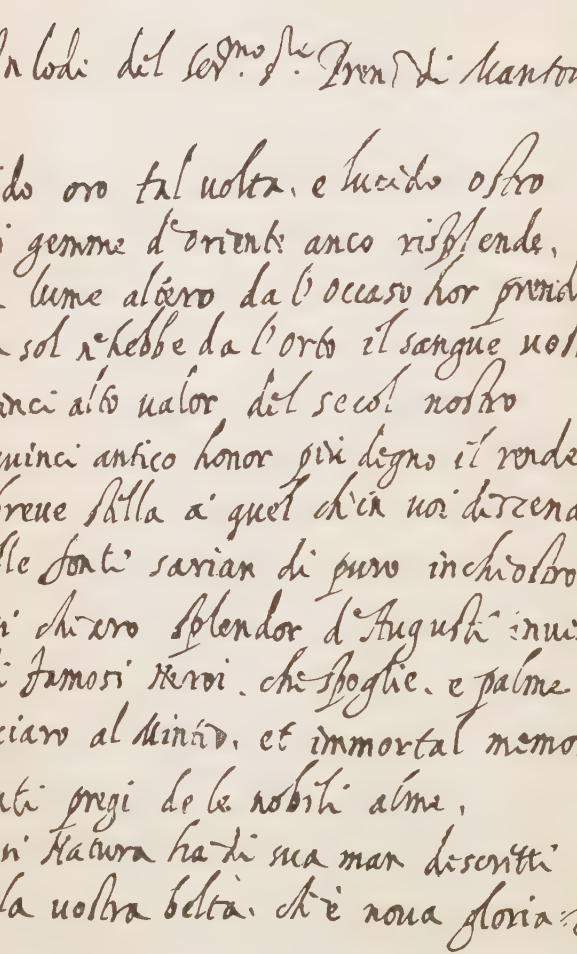
It is with a feeling of regret that I now take my leave of the task which has formed for four years the occupation and solace of my life. I shall be more than satisfied if the hours that have passed so pleasantly away over the performance, be but equalled in gratification by those that may be spent in the perusal.

Woburn Abbey, 10th Month 20th, 1824.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

But few observations appear to me requisite in introducing to the public this new edition of the Translation of Tasso. By the careful revision which I have given to the whole, I have endeavoured to render it more deserving of the approval it has met with, and of that which I would hope it may finally obtain, as a British Classic; with less than which, no writer who has devoted many years to such a task, ought to rest satisfied, how much soever his intimation of such a hope may be open to invidious comment. I have availed myself, for its improvement, of all the strictures I have met with on the work, which I thought deserving of regard, however equivocal the spirit might appear in which they were written. My adoption of the Spenserian stanza I have seen no valid reason for regretting; nor can I think that I have judged amiss of the public taste, in preferring to affix a memoir of the poet's interesting life, rather than a mass of Notes, highly serviceable and appropriate in illustration of the obscure allusion or complex fable of Dante and Ariosto, but wholly superfluous to the lucid text of Tasso.

* The MS. bears the following colophon:—"Here endethe the Names and Armes of thoss knyghte as weare wt King Richard the firste at the assigge of Acon or Acres; which weare copied owte of an owlde Rowle in kepinge and custodye of mr. fitz-Williams of Sprotbrughe, 1563: R. Brooke als. Roug Cross." "This roll," a note says, "is in the Library of Turrenden Dering, Kent."


In lodi del Sereniss.o S.re Duca di Mantoua

Lucido oro tal volta, e lucido ostro
Di gemme d'oriente anco risplende,
Ma lume altero da l'occaso hor prende
Non sol n'hebbe da l'orto il sangue nostro:
E quinci altro valor del secol nostro
E quinci antico honor più degno il rende,
E breue stilla a quel ch'ei ne discende
Mille fonti sarian di puro inchiostro:
Ma si chiaro splendor d'Augusti inuitti
E di famosi Heroi, che spoglie, e palme
Lasciaro al Mondo, et immortal memoria:
E tanti pregi de le nobili alme,
Quali Natura ha di sua man descritti
Ne la nostra beltà, che è nouo gloria?

CONTENTS.

Page

DEDICATION

PREFACES i

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS vi

LIFE OF TASSO vii

LIST OF ENGLISH CRUSADERS lii

THE ARGUMENTS lvii

CANTO I. 1

—— II. 24

—— III. 49

—— IV. 69

—— V. 94

—— VI. 118

—— VII. 147

—— VIII. 179

—— IX. 201

—— X. 227

—— XI. 247

—— XII. 270

—— XIII. 297

—— XIV. 318

—— XV. 339

—— XVI. 356

—— XVII. 376

—— XVIII. 401

—— XIX. 428

—— XX. 462

L'ENVOI 499

LIST OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL,

BY J. BINCHLIFF.

		Canto	Stanza	Page
1.	Portrait of Tasso . . . *To face Title.*			
2.	Satan in Council	IV. ...	9 ...	71
3.	Death of Gernando	V. ...	32 ...	102
4.	The Sword of Sweno	VII. ...	36 ...	188
5.	The Infant Clorinda and the Tigress . .	XII. ...	31 ...	278
6.	The Wizard Ismeno	XIII. ...	8 ...	299
7.	Ismeno's Spells	XV. ...	52 ...	352
8.	Temptation of Rinaldo	XVIII. ...	32 ...	409
9.	Argantes slain by Tancred	XIX. ...	27 ...	435

ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD,

BY . WILLIAMS.

1.	Facsimile of Tasso's Autograph . . .	... ...	... ...	iv
2.	Medallion of Leonora d'Este . . .	... ...	... ...	li
3.	Tancred and the Warrior Maid . . .	I. ...	47 ...	1
4.	Rescue of Sophronia and Olindo . . .	II. ...	44 ...	24
5.	Combat of Clorinda and Tancred . .	III. ...	21 ...	49
6.	Armida sues to Godfrey	IV. ...	65 ...	69
7.	Armida separates Rambaldo and Eustace .	V. ...	83 ...	94
8.	Clorinda and Polypherme	VI. ...	108 ...	118
9.	Argantes	VII. ...	107 ...	147
10.	The Meteor	VIII. ...	32 ...	179
11.	Descent of Michael	IX. ...	63 ...	201
12.	Solyman in the Magic Car	X. ...	15 ...	227
13.	Solyman and Godfrey	XI. ...	86 ...	247
14.	Clorinda slain by Tancred	XII. ...	69 ...	270
15.	Tancred	XIII. ...	46 ...	297
16.	The Siren	XIV. ...	60 ...	310
17.	Ubaldo's Wand	XV. ...	49 ...	339
18.	Rinaldo and Armida	XVI. ...	17 ...	356
19.	The Invulnerable Arms	XVII. ...	58 ...	376
20.	Temptation of Rinaldo	XVIII. ...	30 ...	401
21.	Erminia and Tancred	XIX. ...	110 ...	428
22.	Solyman and Tancred	XX. ...	97 ...	462

THE LIFE OF TASSO.

CHAPTER I.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO THE PERIOD OF HIS FIRST VISIT TO FERRARA.

A.D. 1544–1565; æt. 1–21.

Of the family of Tasso, a name that has passed over Europe with so extraordinary a celebrity, the most ancient notices are of the twelfth century. The Tassi were at that period settled in Almenno, a pleasant territory near Bergamo. About the year 1200, they retired for security from the civil commotions which then distracted the Italian cities, to Cornello, a mountain near the river Brembo; where, in course of time, they became wealthy and powerful lords. About the year 1290, lived Omodeo Tasso, the first inventor, or the revivor of regular posts, whose descendants, obtaining the generalship of the post-offices in Italy and other countries, arrived at high dignities. In Spain and Flanders, some of the Tassi became founders of titled families, and in Germany they attained to the rank of sovereign princes.

The stem of all these illustrious branches, however, remained at Bergamo; and it was in this city that Bernardo, the father of Torquato Tasso, was born, A.D. 1493. Bernardo Tasso, after a youth spent in the cultivation of letters, and in the celebration of an unsuccessful attachment to Ginevra Malatesta, a lady of incomparable beauty, in whose praise he published a volume of poetry, was in 1531 invited by Ferrante Sanseverino, prince of Salerno, to act in the capacity of Secretary, at his court near Naples. In this situation, devoting himself to poetical pursuits, or following his patron in military expeditions, he spent seven or eight years very agreeably; at the expiration of which time, finding himself fast rising in fame and fortune, he paid his addresses to Portia Rossi, a Neapolitan lady of great beauty and accomplishments, and their marriage was celebrated with much splendour, in the spring of 1539.

The happiness which he enjoyed with this amiable woman, was increased, the year following, by the birth of a daughter, whom he named Cornelia, and by the permission of his prince to retire for a time, from the fatigues of his office, to the quiet enjoyment of his favourite studies. He chose for his retreat the city of Sorrento, which, separated from Naples only by its beautiful bay, commands, under a serene sky, a prospect of the whole romantic region round. Here, having hired a palace which overlooked the sea, he conducted his wife and infant daughter, and applied himself to the composition of the "Amadigi," a poem which, he hoped, would not only greatly increase his literary reputation, but add considerably to his means of independence. In this delightful residence, and in the midst of these elegant pursuits, Torquato, the son who was destined so peculiarly to become his pride, and to experience a life of such strange vicissitude, was welcomed into the world, the 11th of March, 1544.

The year 1547 was, however, fatal to the fortunes of his patron. An insurrection arising at Naples against the Viceroy, D. Pedro de Toledo, who

had attempted to establish the Inquisition there, the Prince of Salerno was chosen by the nobility of that city as their ambassador to the Emperor Charles the Fifth. But the Viceroy, anticipating the accusations of his opponents, found means to justify his proceedings; and when Sanseverino reached Nuremburg, he was received as a favourer of heresy and rebellion, and forbidden for awhile to leave the city, upon pain of death. When at length permitted, he returned to Naples, but an attempt having been made to assassinate him by the creatures of the Viceroy, he resolved to forsake a country where he could no longer remain with safety; and Bernardo, who had too much magnanimity to abandon him in his adversity, after settling his family at Naples, departed with him to the court of France. When the news of Sanseverino's defection was known at Naples, he and all his adherents were declared rebels, deprived of their estates, and sentenced to have incurred the penalty of death. By this edict of the States, Bernardo lost a richly furnished house, and an annual revenue of 900 scudi, a stroke, from the effects of which his fortunes never recovered; and the foundation was thus unhappily laid for the uniform life of dependence which Torquato afterwards experienced.

He meanwhile had attained his seventh year; and Portia, in her attention to his education and to that of her daughter, found some solace for the long separation from her husband. Torquato had already received some instruction in Latin from D'Angeluzzo, a friend of his father's, and he was now sent to a seminary of the Jesuits, which had lately been established in the city; and such, says Manso, was his ardour for learning, that to quiet his importunity, his mother was often obliged to let him depart to his studies before day-break, sending a servant with him to light his way. During the three years that he continued under the tuition of those fathers, the young Tasso not only perfected himself in Latin, but made considerable progress in Greek, and cultivated so diligently his talent for rhetoric and poetry, that in his tenth year, he recited original verses and orations, which excited the admiration of all auditors. His father had made it his chief care to imbue his mind early with sentiments of deep piety; and the virtuous dispositions which he had thus acquired, were assiduously cultivated by the Jesuits, his instructors. He was even admitted by them at nine years of age to the communion-table, and, as he observes in one of his letters, partook of the consecrated Host with feelings of unwonted and indescribable satisfaction. To these early impressions may be ascribed the deep sense of religion which pervades his writings, which led perhaps to the choice of a sacred subject for his most celebrated poem, and which certainly in after-life, when all other consolations failed, enabled him to bear up under the pressure of sufferings, too severe to be contemplated, without the strongest emotions of pity and of pain.

Of the progress which young Tasso was making in his studies, his father received frequent accounts. Devoted wholly to the interests of his patron, who resided principally at Venice, he spared no exertions at the court of France to induce a co-operation with his plans for the invasion of Naples; but meeting with small success in the negotiation, and sighing to revisit his family, he solicited and received permission of the prince to return to Italy. Having succeeded therefore in procuring from Pope Julius the Third a special license, he, in the February of 1554, arrived at Rome, and was invited to occupy apartments in the palace occupied by the Cardinal Ippolito of Esté. The Cardinal received him with the utmost courtesy, and interested himself greatly in his affairs; and countenanced by so powerful a protector, Bernardo had little to fear from the malice of his enemies.

With Portia, however, his disconsolate lady, it was far otherwise. She had been entitled on her marriage to a dowry of 5000 ducats, and an investiture on her life of 1500 more, the capital of which, on the confiscation of her

husband's property, she in vain attempted to procure from her brothers. To every representation addressed to them, they turned a deaf ear, and signified to her at length, with unfeeling cruelty, that if she attempted to obtain by law possession of her rights, the strong arm of the Viceroy should not be wanting to awe her into silence. They even exerted themselves to prevent her leaving Naples; and as she could not resolve to hazard the forfeiture of her claims by flight, she retired with her daughter into the monastery of San Festo. This change of residence administered fresh grief to a heart already worn down by sickness and suffering, as it hereby became necessary to send Torquato to his father. The anguish which his departure occasioned, both to himself and her, to whom he now bade a first, and, as it proved, a final farewell, seems never to have been effaced from the poet's memory. He was then but ten years old; yet he thus pathetically laments the parting, in an Ode to the River Metauro, written between twenty and thirty years afterwards.

I.

Me from my mother's breast, a child,
Did cruel Fortune tear;
The tears she shed, the kisses wild
She pressed in her despair
On my pale cheek, and oh, the zeal
Of her most passionate appeal
To Heaven for me, in air
Alone recorded—with regret
I yet remember, weep for yet.

II.

Never, ah! never more was I
To meet her face to face,
And feel my full heart beat more high
In her beloved embrace!
I left her—oh, the pang severe!
Like young Camilla, or, more drear,
Ascanius-like, to trace
O'er hill and dale, through bush and brier,
The footsteps of my wandering sire.

The young Tasso was received by his father, after so long a separation, with the greatest delight, and for two years applied himself closely to his studies. But in 1556 Bernardo received intelligence of the death of this beloved wife, whose fortitude and self-devotion seem to have equalled all that is related of the Roman matrons in the best ages of the republic. She died, it is but too probable, of a broken heart, the victim of sensibility to their mutual misfortunes; but her death was so sudden, as to excite the terrible suspicion of her husband, that she had been poisoned by her brothers. In his verses, in his letters, Bernardo Tasso ceases not to lament her loss, whom he loved, he says, "more than life, and yet whom he loved less than she deserved." By her death, his daughter Cornelia was left in the hands of his unprincipled kinsmen, who some years after set the crowning stroke to their iniquity, by instituting, for the purpose of retaining their sister's portion, a lawsuit against the young Torquato; alleging, that as he had followed his father to Rome, he too had incurred the penalties of rebellion. They shortly also married Cornelia, by this time grown a beautiful and accomplished young lady, to Marzio Sersale, a Sorrentine gentleman, in opposition to the wishes of her father, who had hoped to form for her a higher and more advantageous connexion: as, however, this gentleman, though of small estate, was descended from an ancient and noble family, and as he and Cornelia lived together in the greatest harmony, Bernardo was soon reconciled to the marriage.

A war meanwhile broke out between Philip the Second and the Pope, and Bernardo, from having incurred so deeply the hatred of the Spanish party, not thinking himself secure at Rome, sent his son to Bergamo, where he was received with open arms by his relation, the lady Tasso, and took refuge at Pesaro, in the court of Giudubaldo the Second, Duke d'Urbino. Torquato, during the time he stayed at Bergamo, applied himself assiduously to his studies: in 1557, he was sent for by his father, and presented to the Duke, who made him the companion in study of his son Francesco Maria. To the study of the languages, he now added that of the mathematics and philosophy, perfecting himself at the same time in the exercises of the sword, and in those other bodily accomplishments which were then thought necessary to the formation of a finished gentleman.

Torquato resided nearly two years at the court of Urbino; when, being sent for to Venice by his father, who was printing there his "Amadigi," he was dismissed by the Duke with no less favour than regret. Dante and Petrarch formed, while he was at Venice, the principal subjects of his study, and with their compositions he nourished the poetical enthusiasm that was every day acquiring in his bosom a greater ascendancy. He had now completed his sixteenth year; and his father, anxiously balancing the various chances offered for his advancement in life, resolved to send him to the University of Padua, regarding jurisprudence as the only science that would secure him from the necessity of subjecting his prospects and happiness, as he himself had but too fatally done, to the uncertain protection of the great. To Padua accordingly Torquato went, and was entered of the University in November, 1560.

He prosecuted his studies there with great diligence, attending the lectures of Guido Panciroli, a civilian of eminence. To one, however, whose fancy was wedded to the romantic fictions of Boiardo and Ariosto, law must have proved a dry and a sickening pursuit, more particularly as no one had yet appeared, to give, like Montesquieu, to the science, the dignity and interest of philosophical disquisition. The consequence was, a recurrence in secret to more congenial pursuits, and the production in 1561, of his "Rinaldo." It must be matter of astonishment that a youth who had not yet reached his eighteenth year, should have been able to imagine and conduct to the end, with such masterly skill, a poem of such beauty and regularity, in the short space of ten months, and amidst his unneglected legal occupations. Our young author, however, lest he should incur his father's displeasure, had not dared to acquaint him with the secret; some literary persons of distinction undertook to communicate it, and by commendations of the excellence of the poetry, managed to soften in some degree his affliction at the intelligence. Passing through Padua some time after from Urbino, Bernardo had an opportunity himself of seeing the manuscript, and being satisfied with the genius it displayed, no longer thought of confining the talents of his son to a study so unpalatable to him as the law. At the solicitation of Molino and Viniero, two learned men to whose criticism Torquato had subjected his poem, he even gave permission for its being printed; and it was accordingly ushered into the world from the press of the Franceschi at Venice, in April, 1562. It was received with incredible applause, and the young author was soon known throughout Italy by the endearing name of Tassino, the dear little Tasso. It is impossible for any one to peruse without admiration and sympathy many passages of the work, and more particularly these concluding stanzas, wherein the student, lamenting the circumstances under which the poem was composed, alludes to his early age, and pays a beautiful compliment to his parent, and to the Cardinal Luigi d'Esté, into whose service Bernardo had entered, and to whom the "Rinaldo" was inscribed.

Thus have I sung—in battle-field and bower,
Rinaldo's cares, and prattled through my page,
Whilst other studies claimed the irksome hour,
In the fourth lustre of my verdant age;
Studies from which I hoped to have the power
The wrongs of adverse fortune to assuage;
Ungrateful studies, whence I pine away
Unknown to others, to myself a prey.

Yet O! if Heaven should e'er my wishes crown
With ease, released from Law's discordant maze,
To spend on the green turf, in forests brown,
With bland Apollo whole harmonious days,
Then might I spread, Luigi, thy renown,
Where'er the sun darts forth resplendent rays;
Thyself the genial spirit should infuse,
And to thy virtues wake a worthier Muse.

But thou, first fruit of fancy and of toil,
Child of few hours and those most fugitive!
Dear little book, born on the sunny soil
By Brenta's wave! may all kind planets give
To thee the spring no winter shall despoil,
Life to go forth when I have ceased to live;
Gathering rich fame beyond our country's bounds,
And mixed with songs with which the world resounds.

Yet, ere I bid thy truant leaves adieu,
Ere yet thou seek'st the Prince, whose name, impressed
Deep in my heart, upon thy front we view,
Too poor a portal for so great a guest!
Go, find out him from whom my birth I drew,
Life of my life! and whose the rich bequest
Has been, if aught of beautiful or strong
Adorns my life, and animates my song.

He, with that keen and searching glance which knows
To pierce beyond the veil of dim disguise,
Shall see the faults that lie concealed so close
To the short vision of my feeble eyes,
And with that pen which joins the truth of prose
To tuneful fable, shall the verse chastise,
(Far as its youth the trial can endure,)
And grace thy page with beauties more mature.

At full liberty now to follow his inclinations, Torquato gave up the study of the law with transport, and in November of the same year entered the University of Bologna, where, under the distinguished professors, Pendasio and Piccolomini, he devoted himself wholly to philosophy and the Muses. Before he left Padua, he had conceived the design of writing a poem on the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, a subject the most interesting, and, above all, the most fitted to receive every poetical adornment that the fancy could conceive. He had fixed upon the names of various personages to introduce in it, had imagined several of the episodes with which he afterwards embellished it, and he now sketched out the first three Cantos in 116 octave stanzas, which are yet preserved among the MSS. of the Vatican. To fit himself for the task contemplated, he composed his three admirable Discourses on Heroic Poetry; and being shortly informed that the Cardinal d'Esté had admitted him amongst the gentleman of his household, he set forward to join Bernardo at Ferrara, the principal scene of his glory and misfortunes.

CHAPTER II.

FROM HIS FIRST ARRIVAL AT FERRARA TO HIS FLIGHT FROM THAT CITY.

A.D. 1565–1577; æt. 21–33.

WHEN Tasso reached Ferrara, on the last day of October, 1565, the city was splendid with preparations for the Archduchess Barbara of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand the First, whom Alphonso of Esté was about to receive in marriage. The bride elect made her entrance into the city with a numerous and sumptuous attendance, wearing on her head a golden crown. The balls, the tournaments, and representations that followed in the palace or palace-garden, amidst a stupendous scenery of palaces, and woods, and mountains, lasted for six days, and seemed to the imaginative Tasso rather the work of enchantment than the effect of machinery. He has recorded in the "Aminta" his sensations of transport and astonishment at the magnificent carnival that was thus presented to his view,—a scene, to which we doubtless owe many of the rich descriptions of magical enchantment that we meet with in the "Gerusalemme Liberata."

The death of Pope Pius the Fifth terminated these rejoicings; and the Cardinal Luigi departed for Rome to assist in the election of a new pontiff; leaving Tasso at perfect liberty to attend either to pleasurable or philosophical pursuits. Tasso employed the interval in insinuating himself into the favour of the Princess Lucretia d'Esté; and by her was introduced to her younger sister, Leonara, who was just recovering from a long illness. These two ladies, says Serassi, were most beautiful in person, and of manners so elegant and courteous, as to excite in all the highest admiration. Lucretia was thirty-one years old, her sister a year less,—an age which had only given maturity to her charms, without impairing her vivacity and grace. Their mother, the virtuous and unfortunate Renée of France, had bestowed great pains upon their education; and, besides the usual accomplishments, had inspired them with a taste for poetry, which they occasionally cultivated. To minds of this description, the author of the "Rinaldo," must have been an object of some interest; and the pleasure which the youthful poet felt from their attentions, is attested in some Canzoni of his written at this period, in language full of the respectful gallantry which their favourable notice would naturally inspire. The favour of these Princesses, introduced him in a short time to the notice of their brother, the Duke Alphonso, who knowing him to be engaged in a poem on the conquest of Jerusalem, regarded him with a gracious eye, and introduced him to many of the illustrious men who frequented his court. Grateful for these marks of consideration, Tasso resolved to dedicate his poem to this prince, and to introduce Rinaldo for the hero of his fable, as a means to celebrate him and his family. The "Gerusalemme" was accordingly resumed, and prosecuted with such diligence, that in a few months he had completed five whole cantos. Occasionally he unbent himself from this great work by the composition of complimentary verses to the Princesses, similar to the following, which he addressed to Leonora when she was restricted from singing by her physicians, on account of her delicate state of health.

Ahi! ben è reo destin, che invidia e toglie.

Oh! 'tis a merciless decree,
That to the envied world denies
The sound of that sweet voice which we
So much admire, so dearly prize!

The noble thought and dulcet lay
Breathing of passions so refined
By HONOUR'S breath, would drive away
Sharp sorrow from the gloomiest mind.

Yet, 'tis enough for our deserts,
That eyes and smiles so calm and coy
Diffuse through our enchanted hearts
A holy and celestial joy:

There would be no more blessed place
Than this, our spirits to rejoice,
If, as we view thy heavenly face,
We also heard thy heavenly voice!

On the return of their brother the Cardinal, the Princesses failed not to communicate to him the pleasure they had received from the society of the young poet; for whom, amongst many other obligations, they procured the distinction of being admitted to the table where the highest courtiers were entertained, often in company with the Duke; a favour to which Tasso attached no small consequence. Amongst the distinguished men whose friendship or acquaintance he now acquired, were Agostino degli Arienti, Manzuoli, the Cardinal's favourite Secretary, and Giambattista Pigna, Secretary to the Duke, a Ferrarese poet of great consideration amongst the courtiers: with Guarini, the subsequent author of the "Pastor Fido," he was already acquainted.

There was at this time resident at Ferrara one Lucretia Bendidio, a lady of great beauty, vivacity, and accomplishments, who had touched the sensibility of most of the young geniuses in the city. The harps both of Pigna and Guarini were sounded in her praise; and Tasso, participating in the same feeling of admiration, was equally anxious to obtain her favourable notice. With that inclination to scholastic debate which was so much affected in those ages, he undertook on her account to support in the Academy against every disputant, fifty amorous Theses or Conclusions; and he defended them for three days, with infinite reputation for ingenuity, in presence of an illustrious assemblage of the beauty and learning of Ferrara. But it was not by disputation alone that he sought to find favour in the bright eyes of the lady; she was a charming singer, and Tasso called in the aid of his melodious lute to celebrate her talent. His compliments were not addressed to unheeding ears; for though he met with a formidable rival in Pigna, he failed not to receive from the object of his admiration many marks of partiality. She married into the house of the Macchiavelli, but never ceased to regard him with favour; and in particular studied to console him in the days of his calamity.

Serassi and Dr. Black profess to regard him as having been deeply enamoured of this lady, but I confess I can only discern in the effusions addressed to her, one of those merely amorous fancies which are so apt to play around the heads of susceptible young persons, but which make no deep impression, and vanish altogether with the object that called them into birth. The real symptoms of the passion must be sought for in his compositions of a later, but of no distant date.

These poetical amusements of Tasso were interrupted by the afflicting intelligence, that his father was lying dangerously ill, at Ostia on the Po. He hastened thither immediately, and arrived in time to receive his last benedictions, and on the 4th of September, 1569, at the advanced age of 76, Bernardo Tasso closed a life marked by many vicissitudes and sorrows, but cheered throughout by literary enjoyment, and a truly Christian philosophy. Overcome by grief for his severe loss, and by the vigils he had undergone in his affectionate attendance on him, Torquato himself sickened two days after his father's death; when he had a little recovered, he returned to Ferrara.

In the spring of the following year, a marriage was concluded between the Princess Lucretia and the Prince d'Urbino. Leonora, thus deprived of her most intimate companion, renounced in a great measure all public amusement and devoted herself to pursuits more congenial to her taste—to private study and the conversation of literary men.

Tasso, amongst others, had the honour of frequent admission to her society. He acknowledges in an Ode which he addressed to her on his first coming to Ferrara, that he was then struck with admiration of her person, and that, had he not been checked by reverence, he should have become perfectly enamoured of her. But the regard with which he had been treated by the two sisters, must by this time have much diminished the distance which rank and ceremony had thrown round Leonora; whilst, from the facility of access granted to him, he could not fail to contemplate her perfections with a more unmingled feeling of pleasure and esteem. She on her part, appreciating highly his genius, and his many estimable qualities, found no small enjoyment in his society. To her he read portions of his Poem as they were composed; to her taste appealed; and, flattered by the warmth of her praises and by her gracious condescension, he seems now to have given himself up with less unreserve to the delightful emotions inspired by her presence. Poetry, it must be confessed, was dangerous ground for them to tread in concert, calculated as it peculiarly is to become the echo of those gentle wishes which find a voice so universal in the hearts of youth; nor could Tasso read, nor could Leonora listen to a tale so affecting as that of Olindo and Sophronia, without indulging a train of thought and feeling closely akin to the influences of love. One thing is certain, that at this period he redoubled his assiduities to her, addressing her in strains wherein feeling so far predominates over fancy, as to render it matter of little doubt that her image was gaining over him a powerful ascendancy. The first advances of the passion are, however, marked by great timidity towards the individual beloved; and if Tasso yet dared to acknowledge in song the growing tenderness of his soul, it would probably be in verses like the following, treasured up in privacy as the record of a feeling too sacred or presumptuous to be submitted to the gaze of others.

Amor l'alma m'allaccia, &c.

Love binds my soul in chains of bliss
Firm, rigorous, strict, and strong;
I am not sorrowful for this,
But why I quarrel with him is,
He quite ties up my tongue.

When I my lady should salute,
I can on no pretence;
But timid and confused stand mute,
Or, wandering in my reason, suit
My speech but ill with sense.

Loose, gentle Love, my tongue, and if
Thou'lt not give up one part
Of thy great power, respect my grief,
Take off this chain in kind relief,
And add it to my heart!

In 1570, Torquato attended his lord the Cardinal to the court of France, having first, as a measure of precaution, left a testamentary writing in the hands of one of his intimate friends. On the second visit which the Cardinal paid to the king, he introduced our poet to his acquaintance, saying:—"Behold the bard of Godfrey, and of the other French heroes, who signalised themselves so greatly at the conquest of Jerusalem!" Charles the Ninth

(his name might then be pronounced, and himself approached without horror) received him in the most distinguished manner, saw him often, and gave him uniformly the like reception. He pardoned at his request an unfortunate poet, who, having been guilty of some crime, was ordered for execution, and he would have acknowledged the honour which Tasso rendered to French heroism, by the richest presents, if the highmindedness of our poet had not opposed, by a species of refusal, his beneficent intentions. Amongst the acquaintance which Torquato made in France, none seems to have gratified him more than that of the poet Ronsard, for whose writings he professed great admiration, and who, notwithstanding his unsuccessful attempt to engraft upon French poetry the genius of the Greek, was by no means unworthy of the celebrity he enjoyed. Tasso had here the misfortune to lose the favour of his patron. Whether calumniated by some invidious courtier, or too unguarded in expressing his indignation at the masked severity shown by the ministry of Charles to the Catholics, preparatory to the frightful massacre of St. Bartholomew, he experienced a great change in the Cardinal's behaviour, and as he was of too haughty a spirit to brook the least contumely, he demanded leave of absence, and retired to Rome. Whilst at Rome, it would appear that his favourite Leonora paid a visit to her uncle, the Cardinal Ippolito the Second of Esté, a prelate distinguished by his magnificence in building, and his favour to literary men. The villa and gardens which he formed at Tivoli were considered as the most delightful in Italy; and it must have been in their shades that she received these beautiful verses, attesting the fidelity with which he cherished her image in his absence:—

TO LEONORA OF ESTE.

Al nobil colle, ove in antichi marmi.

To the romantic hills, where free
To thine enchanted eyes,
Works of Greek taste in statuary
Of antique marbles rise,
My thought, fair Leonora, roves,
And with it to their gloom of groves
Fast bears me as it flies;
For far from thee, in crowds unblest,
My fluttering heart but ill can rest.*

There to the rock, cascade, and grove,
On mosses dropt with dew,
Like one who thinks and sighs of love,†
The livelong summer through,
Oft would I dictate glorious things
Of heroes to the Tuscan strings
Of my sweet lyre anew;
And to the brooks and trees around,
Ippolito's high name resound.

But now what longer keeps me here!
And who, dear lady, say,
O'er Alpine rocks and marshes drear,
A weary length of way,
Guides me to thee? so that, enwreathed
With leaves by Poesy bequeathed
From Daphne's hallowed bay,
I trifle thus in song?—adieu!
Let the soft Zephyr whisper who.

* *Che mal può da voi lunge omai quetarmi.*

† *Pur come uom, che d'amor pensa e sospira.*

Meanwhile, by letters to the Princess and her sister, he made application to be received into the service of Alphonso. This, through their mediation, was easily effected; a pension was assigned him of about fifteen crowns of gold a month, and he was obligingly informed that he was exempted from any particular obligation, and might attend in quiet to his studies. Of this fortunate refuge from the storms of fortune, he makes grateful mention in his "Gerusalemme," nor could the severity with which he was afterwards treated by the Duke ever efface from his mind the memory of this kindness. In the leisure and tranquillity of mind which he now enjoyed, our poet applied himself with great assiduity to his "Gerusalemme," filling up the intervals which he had left, adorning it with episodes, and improving perpetually the sweetness and majesty of the diction. As a relaxation from the labour of this revision, taking advantage of a visit which Alphonso made to Rome, he began, and, it is said, in less than two months, finished his "Aminta," a pastoral fable of consummate beauty, which, if he had written nothing beside, would have immortalised his name. In Italy, from the absolute perfection of its style and its great melody of phrase, the Aminta enjoys a celebrity little less eminent than the "Gerusalemme Liberata:" but in our own country, partly from the disrepute into which pastoral poetry has fallen, and partly from our not having long possessed a translation that gave any idea of its excellence, it appears to be but little known or appreciated, except by lovers of Italian. Nothing, however, could exceed its success when, on the return of Alphonso to Ferrara, in the spring of 1573, it was represented before the Cardinal his brother, and a numerous and delighted audience. Their applause was unbounded; nor had the public admiration of its beauties suffered the least diminution, when, eight years afterwards, it issued from the press of Aldus. Edition followed edition in quick succession, and so numerous were the imitations of it, that nothing for a length of time was to be heard of in Italy but pastoral dramas. The Princess Lucretia had not been able to witness the representation of the piece that was making so much noise in all quarters; she therefore requested her brother to permit her the pleasure of hearing it recited by the author, and for this purpose invited him to her palace at Pesaro. As the summer advanced, Lucretia, to avoid the heats, retired to Casteldurante, and took Tasso with her. He here spent some months in a most agreeable manner, completing his great poem, and celebrating the amiable qualities of the Princess in sonnets and canzoni of considerable beauty:* and when he returned to Ferrara, he received both from her husband and herself many

* As for instance, *according to Serassi*, the sonnet commencing "Negli anni acerbi tuoi purpurea rosa." Ginguené, however, is of a very different opinion. It bears, he says, indubitably the impress and the seal of Leonora. I think so too, from the more peculiar applicability of the description to Leonora's character, and from the allusion in it to *Aurora*, one of her undoubted synonyms. As such, I present a translation of it to the reader:—

Thou, lady, in thine early days
Of life didst seem a purple rose,
That dreads the suitor sun's warm rays,
Nor dares its virgin breast disclose;
But coy, and crimsoning to be seen,
Lies folded yet in leaves of green.

Or rather, (for no earthly thing
Was like thee then,) thou didst appear
Divine AURORA, when her wing
On every blossom shakes a tear,
And, spangled o'er with dewdrops cold,
The mountain-summits tints with gold.

valuable presents, and, in particular, a very precious ruby, which was of great service to him in the time of his adversity.

Devoting himself on his return, with the most persevering industry to his poem, he had, at length, in the spring of 1575, the extreme satisfaction of seeing it completed; but, on the other hand, he began to be dissatisfied with his situation, from finding himself an object of hatred to a number of the courtiers, who, envious of the distinction he had acquired by the "Aminta," and jealous of the glory that would attend the publication of his "Gerusalemme," combined to disturb his tranquillity, and by a variety of ways to calumniate him to his patron. He therefore resolved first to discharge his obligations to the family of Esté, by printing his poem under the auspices of the Duke, and then either to retire to Rome, or to seek the service of some prince equally favourable to literary men, like the Cardinal de' Medici. Meanwhile, to render his poem as perfect as possible, he submitted it to the critiques of a number of his friends at Rome—a step which in the sequel involved him in the greatest difficulties, not less from the diversity of opinions, which he found it impossible to reconcile, than from the ascetic severity of one or two of his censors, who professed to see in his charming fictions something profane and seductive, derogatory to the grandeur of the enterprise which he celebrates, and to the sanctity of the Church, of which they were the bigoted expectants. The most acrimonious of these cynics were one Silvio Antoniano and Spero Sperone, an ancient friend of his father: but who, disappointed in his own expectations of poetical renown, had contracted a surliness of disposition which ill-fitted him for discharging the part of a liberal critic.

The "Gerusalemme," however, underwent two revisions, and it was not till the second took place that Antoniano and Sperone assisted. The first was made principally by Da Barga, author of the "Syrias" and "Cynegeticon," by Scipio Gonzaga, and Flaminio de' Nobili, a divine, philosopher, and scholar of considerable eminence. Besides perplexing our poet with several metaphysical objections deduced from the supposed spirit of Aristotle's rules, these critics objected to the episode of Sophronia and Olindo, and to the excess of embellishment which they discovered in the poem. Tasso, however, could by no means bring himself to omit the episode, anxious as he was to preserve throughout his fable the most perfect unity. In the ornamental parts, though obstinate in the opinion that epic poems are the better the more they abound in ornaments, he curtailed many of the most marvellous, in deference to their judgment, and the work of revision was brought to an end in the autumn of 1575. But though the advantages thereof seem to have been considerable, they could not recompense our poet for the effect produced on his sensibility, by the difficulties arising from their contradictory criticisms, and the consequent delay of publication. To the agony which he experienced from these causes (such is his expression), was added a fresh cause of inquietude. He was tormented by the suspicion, and appears to have had

Those days are past; yet from thy face
No charm the speeding years have snatched,
But left it, ripening every grace,
In perfect loveliness, unmatched
By what thou wert, when, young and shy,
Thy timid graces shunned the eye.

More lovely looks the flower matured,
When full its fragrant leaves it spreads;
More rich the sun, when, unobscured,
At noon a brighter beam it sheds;
Thou, in thy beauty, blendest both
The sun's ascent and rose's growth.

sufficient reason for it, that some rival had intercepted his letters, for the purpose of discovering his secrets, and availing himself of the objections made to his poem.

The Princess Lucretia coming meanwhile to reside at Ferrara, Tasso imparted to her his design of going to Rome. She attempted to dissuade him from it, giving it as her judgment that he ought not to depart from Ferrara before the publication of his book, unless perhaps with her to Pesaro, "for that every other journey would be suspicious and odious;" she mentioned to him also, in her solicitude for his welfare, some other circumstances, which convinced him that he was besides very diligently watched. It would seem that Alphonso was apprised of his intention to solicit the protection of some other patron, and was jealous lest he should be defrauded of the dedication. He had heard more than once the various Cantos recited: he was charmed with their beauty, and was now solicitous to rivet the gratitude and obligations which the poet had expressed. For this purpose, he redoubled his attentions, and Tasso was often invited to Belriguardo, a superb palace, surrounded with delightful gardens, to which the Duke frequently retired. He was still, however, fixed in resolution to go to Rome; and Alphonso, desirous to hasten the publication of the poem, at length granted him permission. Tasso was received most affectionately at Rome by Scipio Gonzaga. His evenings he devoted wholly to his literary friends; but the individual whose acquaintance at this period with our poet had the greatest influence on his future fortunes, was the Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici, afterwards Grand Duke of Tuscany, who now made overtures to Tasso of his protection. They were not indeed accepted. Tasso returned to Ferrara without coming to any determination respecting his change of residence; but the interview to which he had imprudently consented, with one of Alphonso's greatest enemies, became, there is too much reason to believe, one of the chief causes of his subsequent misfortunes. At present, however, the Duke, if he felt any anger at the step which his poet had taken, had the temper or the policy to disguise it, and Tasso was received with his accustomed courtesy.

In the February of this year arrived at Ferrara, Eleonora Sanvitali, the bride of Giulio Tiene, Count of Scandiano, a young lady, who to great beauty united a noble disposition and taste for the fine arts. She was accompanied by Barbara Sanseverina, Countess of Sala, her mother-in-law, who, with much majesty of deportment, yielded not to Eleonora in beauty, vivacity, or talent. In the festivals at court, during the Carnival, the Lady Barbara appeared with her hair fashioned in the form of a crown, which gave her, says Serassi, the very air of Juno. The loveliness, however, of Eleonora, rendered peculiarly striking by the exquisite beauty of her under lip, which pouted forth a little, divided with her the admiration of the courtiers; and nothing was heard of in the palace but this rosy lip and graceful coronet. Tasso celebrated both, in verses which procured him the favourable regard of these illustrious ladies, a circumstance which tended not a little to increase the rage and envy of his rivals.

By the death of Pigna, the house of Esté was left destitute of a historian, and Tasso, in order, perhaps, to have a better pretext for leaving Alphonso's service, in case of a repulse, offered himself as a successor. His offer was accepted, and Tasso thus found himself more firmly chained than ever to the court from which he was desirous to be freed. This unsteadiness of purpose drew from Gonzaga a gentle censure; but such was the flux and reflux of his thoughts that he could by no means break the fetters with which he was bound to Ferrara by convenience, by gratitude, and, above all, by his affection for the Princess. He was sensible of the weakness to which he yielded; he dreaded it as the ruin of all his prospects; but a kind expression from the

duke, or a smile from Leonora, was sufficient to dissipate the schemes which he formed in his hours of dissatisfaction. Every means was used that seemed likely to operate in detaching him from an interest so hateful as that of the De Medici. The Duchess d'Urbino, in a long letter, promised to exert in his favour whatever interest she possessed with her brother, and the Princess Leonora, without anything leading to such a subject, said that, hitherto her means had been very limited, but now that her revenue was increased by the demise of her mother, she would render him assistance from that source. "This," says Tasso in his letters, "I neither seek nor will seek;" but the benignity of the offer from one whom he looked up to with such tenderness, must have greatly strengthened for a time his reluctance to leave Ferrara.

The second and more severe revision of the "Gerusalemme" by Antoniano and Sperone was now commenced. The first had left poor Tasso exhausted, perplexed, and in a frame of mind little able to undergo the long series of captious objections which these critics started. Antoniano had been in his youth a distinguished improvisatore and professor of belles lettres at Ferrara. Made subsequently tutor by Pius IV. to his nephew, Cardinal Borromeo, and in the high road to preferment, he devoted himself to theological studies, and became a model of acrimonious sanctitude. Tasso, in the outset of their labours, expresses to Gonzaga his fear that Antoniano would show rather subtlety than soundness of judgment, and so indeed it proved.

But his refined critiques were the least evils that he had to endure from this cold ascetic. Antoniano read the poem not only as a literary critic, but as an inquisitor; and of his rigour in this capacity some idea may be formed by his professing to regard it as a kind of impiety that our poet should mingle magic and worldly passions in the description of a conquest to which the motive was so holy. Acting upon this principle, he condemned all the parts of the poem relative to enchantment and love, strengthening his dictum with the threat that should Tasso refuse to assent to their omission, he would not procure those privileges without which he could not expect to obtain the slightest profit from his work. In order, if possible, to gain the bigot over, Tasso wrote him a long and most ingenious letter, from which, by proposing to omit some of the episodes, enchantments, and seducing passages, he hoped to have some favour shown to his beautiful imaginings. But the letter had no other effect than to make the ghostly critic deem him learned; "a circumstance," says Tasso, in his proud petulance, "about which I am perfectly indifferent." Nor did Sperone give him less vexation than Antoniano. The literary Diogenes affected to discover that the unity of the fable was broken by the important part which Rinaldo performs in the story; an objection which gave Tasso greater anguish than all the rest, as he had prided himself upon the geometrical nicety with which he had constructed the fable, and as the objection against the unity of heroes bore against the whole plan and tissue of the poem. In order, however, to obtain permission to print his book, our poet was obliged to submit to their severity, and with a heavy heart sat down to the mutilation of the poem.

"I have removed," says he, in his after letters, "the miracle of the buried person, the metamorphosis of the knights into fishes, and the wonderful ship; I have moderated greatly the voluptuousness of the last stanzas of the twentieth canto, although they were seen by the Ferrarese Inquisitor, and tolerated, nay, almost extolled. I shall remove the strange events of the eighteenth canto: I shall take away the stanzas of the parrot, those of the kisses, and some of the rest in this and the other cantos which gave most offence to Antoniano, besides a vast number of verses and words. I shall accommodate to his taste the invention of the natural magician; I shall remove from the fourth and sixteenth cantos those stanzas which to him seem licentious, but which are in reality by far the most beautiful. In order, however, that they may not be lost entirely, I will cause

a various impression of these two cantos to be made, and will give them entire to ten or fifteen of my most intimate friends. To the world (such is the necessity of the times), my poem must appear mutilated—but of this say not a word. Flaminio has noticed a thing as artfully managed in my poem, that there is no love in it of which the event is happy, and this is really the case. Surely this might produce toleration for these descriptions; and as the love of Erminia seems in a certain degree to have a happy consequence, I shall remedy this also, and make her not only a Christian, but a religious nun." To this pitiable extent did the first poet of his age find it necessary to prostrate his sublime and delightful genius, with a heart bleeding with anguish and disappointment!

The Princess Leonora, to withdraw him from the vexations which so deeply agitated him, took him with her for a few days to Cosandoli, a delightful country seat on the Po, where, in the amiable society which he most affected, he forgot for a while his anxieties; and when he returned to Ferrara, was sufficiently at ease to resume his poetical attentions to the Countesses of Sala and Scandiana. On the fervour of those to the latter lady, Serassi grounds his opinion that it was with her that Tasso was enamoured, rather than Leonora of Esté; but, after a close consideration of the whole question, it seems sufficiently evident that he used the name of this lady merely as a convenient mask to veil the effusions which his love for the Princess caused him to pour forth. It is possible, notwithstanding, that Tasso may have been betrayed by his admiration of the Countess to assume in his compositions to her the fervour most congenial to his feelings, which, he tells us, were amorous from his youth, no less than to have occasionally feigned a tenderness for the sake of patronage and distinction.

About this period our poet became fully convinced of the treacherous part that had been played by one of his false friends. He had ascertained by unquestionable evidence, that the man had opened with false keys the chest in which he kept his papers. Manso suspects that he had set in circulation the secret of his love for the Princess, with which by this means he had become acquainted, but it is certain he had given proofs of peculiar treachery and malignity; wherefore, meeting each other in the courtyard of the palace, Tasso remonstrated with him in a friendly manner on his dishonourable conduct, but with so little effect that, instead of offering an apology, or even vindicating his innocence, the villain insolently gave Tasso the lie. This the poet requited by a blow, given, he observes, from no impulse of anger, but from his sense of the demands of honour. His opponent made no attempt at the time to resent the blow, but having collected his brothers, they attacked him all at once and unexpectedly from behind, as he was walking alone in the piazza of the palace. Tasso, however, who managed his sword with a dexterity equal to that with which he used his pen, returned their assault with so much bravery, as to put them all to flight. The principal champion, one Maddoló, a notary in the service of the court, repaired to the court of Florence,—the others to different asylums; but the Duke, justly irritated against the refugees, gave orders to his counsellor to proceed against them with the utmost rigour.

To this a new vexation shortly succeeded; our poet received intelligence that his "Gerusalemme" was printing in different cities of Italy. It is impossible to portray the melancholy and agitation into which he was thrown by the unwelcome tidings. He had toiled for many years at the delightful task, and he now saw himself about to be defrauded, not merely of the profit which he had hoped to derive, but of the glory for which his bosom was on fire, as the surreptitious copies could scarcely be expected to appear without many and great errors. He therefore made application to the Duke to use his utmost endeavours for the prevention of so great an injury. Alphonso wrote to different princes and governments in his behalf, and procured from the Pope a written order to all the governors of the Church, both to seize whatever copies

might be printed, and to insist upon the restoration of those which had been sold. The Count Ferrante Tassone, to relieve the tortured mind of Tasso, invited him during these proceedings to Modena, furnished for his amusement every possible species of diversion, and introduced him to a number of distinguished personages whom he collected to do him honour. Foremost amongst these was Tarquinia Molza, a lady celebrated for her beauty, and her elegant Latin and Italian verses. Tasso's admiration of her person and acquirements is evinced in the following short, but charming composition in her praise.

TO TARQUINIA MOLZA.

Mostra la verde terra.

The green earth of its wealth displays
White violets, and the lovely sun
Its sparkling crown of rosy rays
O'er shaded vale and mountain dun.

Thou, lady, for thy sign of wealth,
Of genius, beauty, thought sublime,
Fling'st forth in glorious show by stealth
The riches of unfading rhyme.

And whilst thy laurels, charmed from blight,
Thus greenly mock the passing hours,
Thy verses all are rays of light,
Thy living thoughts ambrosial flowers.

Tasso had not been long returned from Ferrara, ere his melancholy, induced originally on his ardent temperament by the severity of his critics, and the persecutions of his enemies, returned upon him more deeply than ever. He now tormented himself with imaginary fears; fancying that his persecutors had accused him of treachery to the Duke, and of heresy to the Inquisition. To his religious fears was added the suspicion that some of his enemies wished to stab or poison him,—symptoms, which but too plainly indicate the approach of that mental disease which was about to disturb his reason. The Duke and the Princesses endeavoured by every means to calm his groundless anxieties, but their efforts proved wholly unavailing. At length one evening in June, 1577, in the chamber of the Duchess d'Urbino, he ran with his drawn dagger at one of her servants who had given him some real or imaginary offence; and the duke in consequence issued orders for his being confined to his chamber, which he seems to have done in this instance less for punishment than for the purpose of curing his disorder. To this end he caused him to be attended by his ablest physicians, and when convalescent, to be conducted to his delightful palace of Belriguardo. On the subject of heresy, in order more fully to tranquillise his mind, he had him examined by the Inquisitor at Ferrara, who assured poor Tasso in the most affectionate manner that he was both a good and faithful Catholic, and freely absolved him from all accusation. But nothing could satisfy the phantasies he formed: the sentence of the Inquisitor he deemed invalid, as the usual formalities had in his case been unobserved; and although Alphonso repeatedly declared that he was well assured of his fidelity, he still afflicted himself with the idea that he had lost the favour of his patron, whom he harassed with a variety of unnecessary assurances, petitions, and requests. The Duke at last, either wearied out with his delusions, or willing to try the effect of rigour, forbade him to write either to himself or to the Duchess of Urbino. This circumstance increased in a tenfold degree his terror and agitation. A crowd of strange alarms possessed his fancy, and assuring himself that he had no longer any certainty of safety in the Duke's protection, he resolved to provide for his security by flight. Taking advantage therefore of the first solitary moment afforded him, he on the 20th of June fled from Ferrara, leaving

behind him all his manuscripts and books. Dreading pursuit, he selected in his flight the most sequestered paths; and having neglected to provide himself with money, suffered a variety of hardships on his way. From this period we are to behold the finest genius of Italy, a prey to frequent sorrow and disease, wandering from court to court and from city to city, his splendid fancy darkened by distress, his health destroyed by imprisonment, and his noble heart devoured at once by the agonies of hopeless love and the restless ambition of literary glory,—an object now of the highest admiration, and now of the sincerest pity!

CHAPTER III.

FROM HIS FLIGHT FROM FERRARA TO THE DEATH OF LEONORA.

A.D. 1577—1581; æt. 33—37.

Tasso in a few days entered the territories of Naples, with the intention of seeking an asylum at Sorrento, with his sister Cornelia, who was now become a widow, the mother of several engaging children. They had never met since childhood; but having uniformly preserved a great affection for each other, Tasso had no reason to doubt of his being cordially received. The general mistrust, however, which he had recently imbibed, inspired him with the idea of putting her affection to the test, before he made himself known: changing garments therefore with a shepherd, he presented himself before her as a messenger from her brother, with letters that stated him to be in imminent risk of his life. Alarmed at this intelligence, she eagerly inquired of him the particulars; and so touching a picture did he draw of his misfortunes, that his sister fainted with excess of grief. Being now certain of her love, and reproaching himself deeply for the pain he had caused her to suffer, he began to comfort her affliction, and having by degrees prepared her mind for the event, discovered himself to her, and found in her embraces and sisterly tenderness, one of the sweetest consolations he had for a long time known.

Thus welcomed by Cornelia to her beautiful retreat, with the most lovely and sublime scenery constantly before him, the object of the tenderest solicitudes and cares, Tasso soon experienced a sensible improvement both in health and spirits. But in proportion as the melancholy humour dissipated, which had led him to indulge so many apprehensions, arose the suspicion that he had left Ferrara on too light grounds; and passing quickly, as was but too much his practice, from one extreme of conduct to the other, he could not refrain from writing to the Duke and the Princesses to be restored into their wonted favour. His applications were noticed by none but Leonora, and from her reply he sufficiently perceived that it was not in her power to befriend him. Restless now, and perfectly unhappy, he took the resolution to return, and resign his life into the hands of the Duke; and no sooner was he convalescent from a dangerous sickness with which he had been attacked, than he departed from Sorrento to execute his design, though contrary to the urgent advice and entreaties of his sister.

Arrived at Rome, Tasso alighted at the house of his agent, who, as well as the Ferrarese ambassador, received him kindly, and wrote to Alphonso in his favour. To Scipio Gonzaga and the Cardinal Albano, his equally firm friend, it did not seem expedient that he should return to Ferrara, even although he were invited; they advised him to rest content with an assurance of the Duke's forgiveness, and the restitution of his papers and effects. Tasso, however, continued his solicitations, and whether uneasy at the fruitlessness of his

applications, or from a motive yet more strong, became eager to return to Ferrara, stimulated, as Manso imagines, by the letters of Leonora. The Duke, after a time, consented to receive him again into his service; but signified, that it was first necessary for him to recognise, in the melancholy humour with which he was afflicted, the source of all his fears and suspicions, and that he must firmly resolve to allow it to be cured by the physicians; he would not, he said, blame him for his past expressions and conceits, but if, when he came back, he did not submit to the prescriptions of his medical advisers, he should cause the poet to be expelled from his States, with an injunction never to return.

Notwithstanding the coolness of this permission, Tasso submitted to every thing, promised every thing, and returned to Ferrara in company with the ambassador. His first reception was courteous and kind, and for some time he had the same access to the Duke and his sisters as before, but whether his hopes were too high, the frequency and the fervour of his attentions too troublesome, or the insinuations of his foes revived to his prejudice, he soon began to imagine himself slighted; nor could he wholly restrain his impatience at the circumstance of his writings being still withheld, which he was above all things desiring of receiving, to polish and correct. For the purpose of recovering them, he frequently requested an audience of the Princesses; but the door, he informs us, was closed against him by the attendants, sometimes even with disrespect. He had then recourse to the Duke himself, who, however, refused to see him. Thus repulsed at all points, it is not to be wondered at that his patience soon became exhausted; nor that, precluded from that pursuit of glory which was the reigning passion of his soul, he should resolve to seek a surer asylum from mortification and inquietude, in the service of some other lord. Accordingly, after thirteen years of devotion, which merited a better recompense, he a second time quitted Ferrara, and bent his course on foot towards Mantua, hoping that its Duke, who had so highly favoured his father, would extend to him the like protection. The daughter of that prince, however, was on the point of becoming the second wife of Alphonso; so that, finding his prospects at Mantua by no means promising, Tasso departed, first to Padua, and afterwards to Venice, having been obliged to sell, for the supply of his exigences, the collar of gold, and ruby ring, which, in his happier hours, had been presented to him by the Duchess d' Urbino. At Venice, Maffeo Viniero, a patrician and man of merit, wrote in his favour to the Grand Duke of Tuscany; but before a reply could be received, Tasso, with one of his sudden decisions, quitted Venice, and proceeded to the court of Urbino, where his person and misfortunes were well known, and where he met with the respect and sympathy most soothing to his wounded mind.

It was not long, however, before his melancholy returned on him with added force, and with his melancholy his usual train of suspicions and imaginary dangers; so that, not deeming himself safe, even at the court of Urbino, he determined to have recourse to the protection of the Duke of Savoy; he wrote to that prince a letter full of courtesy and elegance, and, without uttering a word of his intention, withdrew from Urbino, and turned his steps towards Piedmont. On the road to Vercelli, arriving towards evening on the banks of the Sesia, he found the river so swollen, that the ferryman absolutely refused to venture over. A storm came on, and Tasso would have remained in a very forlorn condition, had not a young gentleman whom he encountered, offered him the hospitality of a neighbouring mansion, where, introducing him to his father, a man of pleasing and venerable appearance, he was entertained with the utmost liberality, in a style of perfect elegance. Tasso had declined revealing his name; but when, after the circulation of wines and fruits, their conversation became less reserved, when passing from one subject

to another, they at length discoursed on the economy of agriculture; our poet displayed so much learning, and especially spoke in so sublime a manner of the creation of the world, and the sun's motions, that his estimable host began to gaze upon him with greater attention, and after a pause to say, "that now he knew he had entertained a more illustrious guest than he had at first supposed; and that he was perhaps the person of whom some rumour had spread in those parts, who, fallen into misfortunes by some human error, was as much deserving of pardon, from the nature of his offence, as he was in other respects worthy of admiration and renown." Nothing can exceed the beauty and repose of the picture which Tasso has drawn in his "Dialogue of the Father of a Family," of the whole romantic incident. But grateful as the cordiality of his host must have been, and

"In a strange land,
Such things, however trifling, reach the heart,"—

the graceful intimation that he stood discovered by his talents, must have been dear indeed to our poet, and have given, as he sate

"Admiring, listening, quaffing gramolata,"

additional zest to the delightful entertainment. He remained a night with the good old father and his family, and next morning continued his journey. His money was exhausted; and he was, he tells us, compelled to wade on foot, through mire and water, till he reached Turin. At the gates of Turin, from an idea of his insanity, and from his having no passport to produce, he was repulsed by the guards, and in great embarrassment, till relieved by accidentally meeting with Ingegneri, a man of letters with whom he had been familiar at Venice, who conducted him to the palace of the Marquis Philip of Esté. This nobleman had known Tasso in his happier days at the court of Ferrara; he could not, without extreme pity, behold the state to which he was reduced; he received him with kindness, lodged him comfortably, and bountifully supplied all his wants. Thus hospitably entertained, and presented to Charles Emanuel, the Prince of Piedmont, who wished to receive him into his service, with the promise of every advantage that he had formerly enjoyed, Tasso once more began to respire from his afflictions. Could he have been satisfied with accepting the proposals of the Prince, or have even been willing to continue under the mild protection of the Marquis of Esté, he might have passed his future days, perhaps in happiness and peace, but certainly exempt from many of those calamities which afterwards befel him. But that unhappy restlessness of mind, which, whether it arose from melancholy, love, or sorrow, was always exerting an evil influence on his fortunes, prevented this desirable event. The remembrance of Ferrara, and his strong attachment to the Duke Alphonso, to say nothing of Leonora, joined to a vehement desire to repossess his manuscripts, began to distract him more powerfully than ever. Thus restless and uneasy, he appealed once more to the efforts of his faithful friend, the Cardinal Albano, who, making application to the Duke, on the promising occasion of his marriage, obtained a favourable answer, and Tasso eagerly solicited of the Marquis permission to depart. But this the prudent nobleman, whether he was not fully persuaded of Alphonso's friendly disposition to the poet, or whether he believed that Tasso's state of mind was not such as to permit his presence at the festivities without some disturbance, hesitated for a while to give,—counselling him, in the most affectionate manner, to wait at least till spring, when he himself should be going to Ferrara, to compliment Alphonso on his nuptials. It would have been well had Tasso listened to this discreet advice; no argument, however, could conquer the obstinacy of his resolution, and taking leave of the Marquis, he set out directly for Ferrara. Never was there an action that more strongly resembled an impulse of fatality.

He arrived at Ferrara in March, 1579, the day before that on which the new consort was expected. Every one was occupied in preparations for her reception; no one had leisure to announce his arrival, whilst the ministers of Alphonso and the gentlemen of the court, from whom he had expected an affectionate welcome, treated him with careless indifference, if not with rude neglect. Under this heavy disappointment, surrounded by scenes in utter dissonance with his feelings, without even a fixed apartment, seeking in vain through that vast palace for a place where he might at least indulge repose,—excluded, after the festival was over, from the presence of the Duke and of his sisters, neglected, as he thought, by his friends, derided by his enemies, and the casual sport of insolent domestics, the unhappy Tasso found his patience sink under the trial; in a fit of anger he gave a loose to his indignation, and publicly breaking out into the keenest invectives against the House of Esté, cursed the years he had lost in their ungrateful service, and retracted all the praises he had lavished on them in his verses. The Duke, early enough apprised of his injurious expressions, without considering whether he had given any just occasion for them, gave orders for the poet to be conducted to the hospital of St. Anne, an asylum for lunatics and sick people of poor condition, where he was at once placed under strict guard, and treated as a pauper and a madman.

Nothing could exceed poor Tasso's consternation at this new stroke of misfortune. He remained for several days in a state of stupor, and when he recovered from the fever caused by the indignity, it was to bewail his condition thus pathetically in a letter to Gonzaga. "Ah wretched me! I had expected to close my life with glory and renown; but now, oppressed by the burden of so many calamities, I have lost every prospect of reputation and honour. Indeed, I should consider myself as sufficiently happy, if, without suspicion, I could quench the thirst with which I am continually tormented; and if, as one of the vulgar, I could lead a life of liberty in some poor cottage, if not healthy, (which I can no longer be,) at least free from this anguish. If I were not honoured, it would be sufficient for me not to be abominated; and if I could not live after the manner of men, I would at least quench the thirst that consumes me, like the brutes, which freely drink from stream and fountain. Nor do I fear so much the vastness, as the duration of this calamity, and the thought of this torments me horribly, especially as in such a situation I can neither write nor study. The fear too, of perpetual imprisonment increases my melancholy, and the squalor of my beard, my hair, and habit, exceedingly annoy me. But, above all, I am afflicted by solitude, my cruel and natural enemy; which even in my best state, was sometimes so tormenting, that often, at the most unreasonable hours, I have gone in search of company." The Prior of the Hospital was named Agostino Mosti, a Ferrarese of noble birth and a man of letters. Some sympathy and kindness might have been naturally expected from him, but from a native moroseness of disposition, from literary envy, or the command of his superior, his treatment of the poet was, on the contrary, ruthless and severe. The affectionate behaviour, however, of his nephew Giulio was some compensation for the cruelty of the uncle. This excellent youth, ambitious of Tasso's conversation, passed whole hours in his cell, listening with delight to the recitation of his verses, writing others to his dictation, and endeavouring by a thousand ways to mitigate his sorrows. His kindness made a deep impression on Torquato's heart; he speaks of him warmly in many of his letters,—addresses him affectionately in his verses; and a number of our poet's compositions at this period, copied out and thus preserved to posterity, remain as an honourable and enduring record of this young man's benevolence and goodness.

Tasso, not long after his imprisonment, appealed to the mercy of Alphonso

in a canzone of great beauty, couched in terms so respectful and pathetic, a- must have moved, it might be thought, the severest bosom to relent. It commences thus:—

TO THE DUKE OF FERRARA.

O magnanimo figlio.

O glorious prince, magnanimous increase
Of great Alcides,* whose paternal worth
Thou dost transcend! to thee who in sweet peace
From troublous exile to thy royal hearth
Received'st me erst,—again, yet once again,
I turn, and faint from my deep cell, my knee,
Heart, soul, and weeping eyes incline; to thee
My lips, long silent, I unclose in pain,
And unto thee, but not of thee, complain.
Turn thy mild eyes, and see, where a vile crowd
Throng—where the pauper pines, the sick man moans,
See where, with death on his shrunk cheeks, aloud
Thy once-loved servant groans;
Where, by a thousand sorrows wrung, his eyes
Grown dim and hollow, his weak limbs devoid
Of vital humour, wasting, and annoyed
By dirt and darkness, he ignobly lies,
Envying the sordid lot of those,—to whom
The pity comes which cheers their painful doom.
Pity is spent, and courtesy to me
Grown a dead sound, if in thy noble breast
They spring not: what illimitable sea
Of evil rushes on my soul distrest!
What joy for Tasso now remains? alas!
The stars in heaven, the nobles of the earth
Are sworn against my peace; and all that pass,
War with the strains to which my harp gives birth;
Whilst I to all the angry host make plea
In vain for mercy, most of all to thee!

* * * * *

The heart of Alphonso was however impregnable to the appeal, and Tasso in another noble ode had recourse to the Princesses, whose pity he invoked, in the name of their own mother, who had known, herself, if not the like horrors, the like solitude of imprisonment, and bitterness of soul.

TO THE PRINCESSES OF FERRARA.

O figlie di Renata.

Daughters of lorn Renée, give ear! to you
I talk, in whom birth, beauty, sense refined,
Virtue, gentility, and glory true
Are in such perfect harmony combined:
To you my sorrows I unfold—a scroll
Of bitterness—my wrongs, my griefs, my fears,
Part of my tale—I cannot tell the whole,
But by rebellious tears!
I will recal you to yourselves, renew
Memory of me, your courtesies, your smile
Of gracious kindness, and (vowed all to you)
My past delightful years;—
What then I was, what am; what, woe the while!
I am reduced to beg; from whence; what star
Guided me hither; who with bolt and bar
Confines, and who, when I for freedom grieved,
Promised me hope, yet still that hope deceived!

* Hercules II., Duke of Ferrara.

These I call back to you, O slips divine
Of glorious demigods and kings! and if
My words are weak and few, the tears which grief
Wrings out, are eloquent enough; I pine
For my loved lutes, lyres, laurels: for the shine
Of suns, for my dear studies, sports, my late
So elegant delights, mirth, music, wine;
Piazzas, palaces, where late I sate,
Now the loved servant, now the social friend,—
For health destroyed, for freedom at an end,
The gloom—the solitude—the' eternal grate—
And for the laws the Charities provide,
Oh, agony! to me denied'! denied!
From my sweet brotherhood of men, alas,
Who shuts me out!———————
* * * * *

Although no notice seems to have been taken to the poet himself of this most touching address, it cannot be supposed that the two sisters read it without commiseration, and an earnest desire to mitigate the harshness of their brother's treatment. But great as their influence was with him, the resentment which he cherished was of a nature not to be appeased. In vain the Emperor Rodolph and the Cardinal Albert of Austria, his brother, in vain the Prince of Mantua, brother of the new Duchess, interceded in Tasso's behalf. It was the Duke's reply to all, that his purpose in confining him, was *only to benefit and cure him*; and that whenever he might become convalescent, he should be set at liberty. Thus disappointed on all hands, and with the prospect before him of perpetual captivity, the unhappy object of his merciless prescription sank into a state of the deepest melancholy. "Nor do I lament," says he, "that my heart is deluged with almost constant misery; that my head is always heavy, and often painful; that my sight and hearing are much impaired: and that all my frame is become spare and meagre; but passing all these with a short sigh, what I would bewail is the infirmity of my mind. . . . . My mind sleeps, not thinks; my fancy is chill, and forms no pictures; my negligent senses will no longer furnish the images of things; my hand is sluggish in writing, and my pen seems as if it shrunk from the office; I feel as if I were chained in all my operations, and as if I were overcome by an unwonted numbness and oppressive stupor."

His power of composition at length returned, though slowly, and towards the conclusion of the year 1580, in a letter to Gonzaga, he describes himself as having recovered in a great measure from his languor.

A new source of grief, however, occurred to disturb his growing tranquillity. Ten cantos of his "Gerusalemme" made their appearance at Venice, full of errors and mutilations, after a very imperfect copy in possession of the Duke of Tuscany, pirated by Celio Malaspina, who dedicating the edition to a senator of Venice, obtained the privilege of the republic for its publication. If Tasso thought that his poem in its best state was still imperfect, what must have been his regret and indignation at the sight of it thus mangled! He complained to the Senate of Venice, and to that of the Grand Duke; but the injury was done; and when the first ebullition of his wrath was past, he endeavoured to lose all remembrance of the evil in more available pursuits. Besides his delightful "Dialogue of the Father of a Family," which he now wrote, he collected together all the fugitive pieces which he composed during the last two years, chiefly in prison, and inscribed them in a short, but elegant address, to the two Princesses. "I dedicate," he says, "to your Illustrious Excellencies these verses, composed by me in these last years of my unhappiness, that it may be seen that neither the malignity of men, nor the severity of fortune, has the power to deprive me either of the sense of your deserts, or

of the desire to honour and to serve you. . . . May you live happy!" The Duchess d'Urbino shewed herself very sensible of this mark of his esteem; but Leonora was unfortunately far from being able to read either the verses or dedication. She had been long labouring under the attacks of a severe malady, and a few months more sufficed to carry her immaturely to the grave. She died with resignation and Christian hope, Feb. 10, 1581, in the 44th year of her age.

A letter is extant of Tasso's to Panigarolo, a celebrated preacher at that time in Ferrara, written during her illness, in which he intreats him to kiss in his name the hand of Leonora, and to say that he prayed for her recovery. He offers also affectionately, if such should be her desire, to send for her amusement the productions of his Muse. Her death affected him deeply. It has been too hastily concluded by Serassi, by Dr. Black, and all other writers on the subject, that because he added nothing to the voluminous effusions that were published on her death by the servile band of rhymers round the court, he scattered no poetical flowers over the tomb of the Princess. There are a thousand reasons why the proud and noble mind of Tasso would scorn to compete in public with these minions of a man who wronged him; but let the reader peruse the following secret tributes, so applicable to the situation of both parties, and judge for himself whether the long-loved Leonora passed away from earth, without some "melodious tears" from the lute of her admirer.

ON THE DEATH OF A BEAUTIFUL LADY.

"*Non suol mai vaga damma.*"

Ne'er did the thirsty hart so fly,
When fiery summer scorched its frame,
To the cold water-brooks, as I,
Unhappy! to the ardent flame.
And art thou gone, my gentle star?
Oh suns! oh skies! oh ye, my sweet
Familiar customs! the warm war
I used to wage, e'en in the heat
Of her coy cheek and colouring brow!
So rosy then, so icy now!

But the following is perhaps yet more unequivocal.

ON THE DEATH OF A BEAUTIFUL LADY.

"*La bella fiamma, che m' ardeva il core,*
Dove le sue faville io serbo e celo."

The flame that late my heart consumed,
Whose sparks I cherish and conceal,
Is quenched on earth, but reillumed
In heaven,—in radiant pomp to wheel
Amidst those other lights which there
Perpetual bliss and glory share.

There I behold it beam with love
When Night her sable curtain spreads,
And scatters o'er the mead and grove
Her hoary frost,—it shines and sheds,
I feel it shed around, a sweet
Assurance of congenial heat.

Sweet Flame, but now a lovely Star!
If e'er you ruled, whilst here you stayed,
My dubious footsteps near and far,
Oh, now that thou 'rt immortal made,
From these wild rocks and billows dark,
Guide to calm rest my weary bark!

The assertions of Serassi indeed on the whole subject of the loves of Tasso and Leonora, are to be received with the utmost caution. Dedicating his work to a Princess of the same house,* it is his evident aim to guard the family of Esté from the imagined degradation of the world's belief that a lady of Leonora's rank could stoop to become enamoured of her brother's pensioner; whilst his frequent representation of her as a temple of chastity, would lead one to imagine that the world regarded her as having engaged with Tasso in a criminal intrigue, rather than as having indulged with him in the simple luxury of loving. The Abbé's apparent sense of some necessity for discountenancing the idea of their mutual passion, has even led him to suppress part of a letter from Tasso to one of his friends, in which the poet avows his love in the most undisguised manner—an instance of disingenuousness that must excuse us from placing any reliance on his statements or views in this particular. A living writer on the question has well observed, "that Serassi seems throughout to be labouring with a secret, or at least with a persuasion, which he is at a loss in what manner honestly to conceal."† His representations would tend to the conclusion, that the love of Tasso for the Princess is little more than a popular fable; it may not therefore be amiss to devote a few pages to the inquiry, and to support the positions already advanced, by those farther proofs which may be gathered from the poet's writings, and the lucid arguments of Ginguené.

In this inquiry, it will be wholly unnecessary to revert to a consideration of the three Leonoras in the tale of Manso, or of the fabled and exploded kiss. Of the former, one is proved to have been a misnomer; nor is there any valid reason for supposing that Tasso's attention to Sanvitali, the second, was more than a means to secure to him, in the jealous court of Ferrara, the countenance of so powerful a patron, or than a mask to his love for the sister of Alphonso. To Leonora of Esté, he submitted all his compositions; and whilst sonnets and canzoni are addressed to Sanvitali in the most undisguised manner, those to the Leonora of Ferrara are involved almost uni-

* Maria Beatrice d'Esté, wife of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. When I first read Serassi, I could not help suspecting that the love of Tasso for Leonora was a theme somewhat distasteful to the feelings of this august personage. Since the text was put to press, I have met with an anecdote which clearly shows this to have been the case, and I am now in my mind perfectly satisfied as to the cause of the good Abbé's *réticences* in this particular. The anecdote is a curious one, and of too much importance to be left unrecorded here. "In the year 1816," says the Count Stendhal, in his "Life of Rossini," "I was in one of the largest cities of Lombardy. Some rich amateurs, who had established a citizens' theatre there, splendidly decorated, conceived the idea of celebrating the arrival within their walls of the Princess Beatrice d'Esté, the mother-in-law of the Emperor Francis. They caused an entirely new opera, both words and music, to be prepared in her honour, which is the greatest compliment that can be paid to any one in Italy. The poet founded the opera on a comedy by Goldoni, called Torquato Tasso. The music was composed in a week; the piece was put in rehearsal; everything proceeded rapidly; when, on the very evening before the performance, the Princess's Chamberlain called on some of the distinguished citizens who intended to do themselves the honour of singing before her, and told them, *that it was not very respectful to recal, in the presence of a princess of the House of Esté, the name of Tasso—a man who had behaved so ill to that illustrious family.*" The citizens, like good subjects of the modern Ostrogoth, respected the illustrious lady's sensibility to the subject, "and the name of Lope de Vega was substituted for that of Tasso!" The world is, doubtless, fixed in its opinion as to the individual who had most cause of complaint; but, passing such considerations, what I would infer is, that a Princess who could so ill endure the name of Tasso as to proscribe it in a casual entertainment, would be certain to exert her influence to have her scruples gratified in a work of so much importance as Serassi's, and on a question in which her pride of rank was so intimately concerned, before she gave permission for the work to be dedicated to her.

† Hobhouse. Illustrations to the 4th Canto of "Childe Harold."

formly in a veil of studied secrecy, in the true spirit of the following address:

"Ode, go thou forth in secret, born of love
And holy zeal to her white hand, and pray,
Pray her to hide thee 'twixt her breasts and veil,
From sight of heaven and men!"

Sometimes, in the manner of Petrarch, he celebrates her under the disguise of ORA, AURA, and AURORA; sometimes under an artificial combination of words which would connect into her name, as in his verses "On a charming Mouth," which thus conclude:

Se ferir brami, scendi al petto, scendi,
*E di si degno cor tue stra*LE ONORA!

And yet more clearly at the finish of the canzone written to her on his first arrival at Ferrara—

E le mie rime.....
Che son vili e neglette, se non quanto
Costei LE ONORA *co 'l bel nome santo.*

And my rhymes.....
Worthless and poor, save inasmuch as she,
Of her most holy and enchanting name,
Does them the HONOUR.

This composition, it may be well to bear in mind, was written many years before his acquaintance with the Countess of Scandiano.

There are some remarkable expressions in the verses on the name of his Lady, in which the same disguised echo is preserved.

DeLL' ONOR *simulacro, è il nome vostro.*

Thy name is HONOUR's symbol, wholly fair,
Fit for an angel like thyself to bear;
The swan, not siren's music forms its sound,
The ciphers purple on a golden ground.
Go, search on high from star to star to find
The things most precious, shining, and refined,
Bring gems from earth, bring pearls from the blue sea.
Their various glories shew combined in thee.
Whence he who named thee wished to represent
Thy rich perfections and divine descent,
As he who formed thee, with his mind pursued
The ideal image of celestial Good.
And thou, MINE IDOL,* form'st in soul and frame
The living echo to that perfect name;
Nor is it beauty's fault, if in the stir
Of passion, men make love to it, and err.

These proofs of strong affection are perhaps yet more certainly confirmed in a sonnet and canzone dictated by jealousy, when the hand of Leonora was demanded by a prince, of the duke, her brother. Leonora, however, declined the offered honour, and it was after fifteen years of constancy that Tasso addressed, avowedly to her, the remarkable lines in which he assures her that length of time has not in the least diminished his affection.

TO LEONORA OF ESTE.

Perchè in giovenil volto Amor mi mostri.

Though, princely Lady, Love sometimes appears
To me, with roses in his smiling face,
My fifteen years of woe, my fifteen years
Of fruitless song he cares not to efface.

* IDOL MIO.

And the fond heart which at thy worth whilere
Glowed, and has since been most sincerely thine,
Yet in its casket treasures forms more fair
Than gems or corals, pearls or purples fine.

This would it whisper in a sigh so low,
So low, yet still so audible and sweet,
As might induce the iciest heart to glow,
With the like amorous languishment and heat.

But of thy graces, its delightful wealth,
So avaricious is it now become,
As not to whisper of them ev'n by stealth,
But in itself to woo them and be dumb.

Dr. Black, influenced by the representations of Serassi, finds a great objection to the reality or fervour of Tasso's love in the age of Leonora, which was thirty when they became acquainted: as if the passion, in a youth of twenty-one, were a nice distinguisher of this difference of age;—as if its very first operation in the mind were not to break down every such barrier, which cool calculation might be disposed to raise, that the heart may abandon itself at will to the delicious emotions of its new existence. "But," says Ginguené, as it were in reply to such futile reasoning, "Leonora was still handsome, was intelligent, attached to poetry and the fine arts, fond of retirement, delicate in health, and averse to the follies of the world. The effect of all these qualities combined, upon a young poet full of sensibility, could easily efface that of the inequality of age; whilst the easy access which he obtained, the lively interest which he inspired, the intimacy induced by his recitations, and the testimonies of her admiration for his verses, might dissipate with no less ease the inequality of rank. Tasso could not conceal from himself the boldness of his pretensions; but at his age, penetrated, as every thing tends to make us believe, with an emotion as pure as the object that excited it, and relying on this very purity for his hope of success, if he dreaded the fate of Icarus and Phäeton, he reassured himself by other examples which poetic fable presented to his imagination, and which wrapt his heart in a pleasing illusion. 'Ah! what can terrify,' he says, 'in a high enterprise, him who puts his confidence in Love! What cannot Love effect, which subdues the Celestials themselves? It drew from the spheres the chaste Diana, captivated with a mortal's charms; it raised to the spheres the charming boy of Mount Ida.' Such is the literal translation of one of his Sonnets, which can have neither another object, nor another sense."

Again, before leaving Ferrara for France, with the Cardinal Luigi d'Esté, Tasso, as we have seen, made a will, and left it in the hands of one of his friends. In this, amongst other things devised, he says;—With regard to my compositions, it is my wish that all my Love-sonnets and madrigals should be collected and published; but with regard to those, which, whether amatory or not, I have written for any friend, my request is that they be buried with myself, excepting this one only.

Or che L' AURA *mia dolce altrove spira.*

Now that my dulcet Zephyr seeks to blow
Through other woodlands, who would linger here?
Where the green vale grows gloomy, and the year
Takes the black tint of misery and of woe.
Here not one ray of joy is seen to glow,
Love becomes rustic, and consorts with swains,
Feeds the rude herds, nor in the noon disdains
To turn the furrow, or the mead to mow.

O happy groves! blest plains! where bird and brute,
Trees and rude rocks have sense to rate aright
The charming sound of her approaching foot;
What influence now has not her dulcet light,
If, as she goes or stays, it makes erewhile
The city frown, and the dark forest smile!

What is there in this sonnet to render Tasso so peculiarly desirous of its being preserved from oblivion? We see that it presents at the commencement one of those disguisements of name of which mention has been made! It must have been written on Leonora's departure for the country on some occasion, or of her too long continuance there. Some interesting association of this kind connected with it, can alone account for his desire to have a composition preserved, so inferior, in a poetical point of view, to those he was in the habit of composing.*

But what is most worthy of remark in this instrument, is the appeal to the Princess with which it closes. "Should an impediment take place in any of these matters, I intreat Sig. Hercules to have recourse to the favour of the most excellent Madam Leonora, which, *for the love I bear her*,† she will liberally grant." Who but must clearly perceive in this appeal the fond project of a lover, to occupy, in case it were his fortune to perish in a distant country, the memory of her whose image was stamped upon his heart?

A fresh confirmation of the conclusions which we draw from these various proofs, is to be found in the beautiful portrait he has drawn of the Princess, under the name of Sophronia, in the second canto of his "Gerusalemme." Every one recognised Leonora in that Virgin of mature age, full of high thoughts and principles sublime, whose beauty in her own eyes had no other value than as it added to the lustre of her virtues, whose greatest merit was to hide her virtues in the shade, and to shun in this seclusion the praise and admiration of men. Every one in Ferrara called up the image of Leonora, in his description of Sophronia's walking through the streets of the city, veiled and with downcast eyes, in a manner no less coy than graceful, with an air which excited a doubt whether she would conceal or heighten her charms, whether it were chance or art that so gracefully disposed her garments. But all did not pay the like attention to Olindo, her young lover, who is represented as modest as Sophronia was beautiful, who feared much, hoped little, and presumed in nothing. Can it be doubted that Tasso, in the first transports of his passion, had wished in Olindo to represent himself! that the idea had frequently crossed his fancy of dying for the woman he adored, and that he eagerly seized this occasion to express the desires which, in his own person, he did not dare to avow! The Episode has been generally looked upon as a fault in his fable; all the friends whom he consulted, considered it as such; every one insisted on its being cancelled; he perceived, he acknowledged it himself to be a defect, yet steadily refused his consent to the sacrifice: even the perfection of his poem, on which were set all his hopes of glory, yielded in this instance to an interest more dear.

But the affection of Tasso for Leonora, ardent as it was, was subject to occasional inequalities and checks We have seen him in company with the Duchess d'Urbino, giving himself up at Castelduranto for several months to a round of agreeable pursuits, which presuppose between Leonora and himself some coolness. A letter, which he wrote to her at the time, bearing traces on his side of a latent jealousy, favours the supposition. "I have not," he

* Note, that this sonnet was written some years before the arrival of Sanvitali at the court of Ferrara, which occurred in 1576, whilst Tasso's journey to France took place in 1571. It could therefore bear no reference to her.

† "PER AMOR MIO."

commences, "written to your Excellency for so many months, *rather from defect of subject than want of inclination*, and this will appear from the smallness of the cause upon which I take occasion to do myself that honour. I send your Excellency a sonnet, as my usher to your memory, for *I think I recollect* having promised to send you all my new compositions. This sonnet has little resemblance to *those beautiful ones which I suppose you are in the daily habit of receiving*; and indeed it is as poor in wit and art, *as I myself am in good fortune. In my present state, however, it is impossible for me to do better*; and I send it, as, whether good or bad, *it will effect what I desire*. Do not think, however, that I have at present such vacancy of thought, as to have in my heart any room for love; it expresses not my own feelings, (or perhaps it might not have been so bad), but was composed at the request *of a poor lover, who having for some time past quarrelled with his mistress, can hold out no longer, but is forced to capitulate, and demand compassion.* Nothing further remains for me to say, except that the stay of Madam, your sister, is rather protracted, than otherwise, so that I believe she will not depart for Ferrara before the 18th of this month. I most humbly kiss your hands. From Casteldurante, the 3rd of Sept. 1573."

The following is a translation of the sonnet.

Sdegno, debil guerrier, campione audace!

Bold in defiance, but in war most weak,
Wrath! thou hast brought me with blunt arms to face
Love, who with radiant shafts and glowing grace
Stands to claim vengeance for injurious pique.
Thy lance is snapt, pale turns thy crimson cheek,
At the first fanning of his golden wing;
What if thou wait'st till from the sounding string
The arrow leaps? rash fool, forgiveness seek!
I cry you grace, I stretch the languid hand,
My knees I bend, and naked lay my breast:
If fight you will, let pity for me stand,
She will acquire me fame, or death at least;
For if one tear flows, death will prove renown,
And sad submission a triumphal crown!

This letter and sonnet contain important disclosures. Serassi, who has published the former, very justly concludes that the sonnets which Leonora was in the habit of receiving, were those of Pigna and Guarini. But it is easy to see farther. Guarini, who always prided himself on rivalling Tasso, was doubtless the one whose assiduities and verses had given him umbrage; he had wished to supplant him, had met with resistance, was piqued, and in this disposition had departed for Casteldurante with Lucretia. The enjoyments which he there met with, had for a time beguiled his thoughts; he had passed several months without writing even to Leonora; but the anger he had indulged was weakened, love regained its wonted ascendancy; he eagerly desired to return, and sent as his precursor this Sonnet, which possesses great interest, if such were the state of affairs between them, but none, if it were otherwise. He surely *did* compose at that time verses much more worthy, in a poetical point of view, to be sent to the Princess;* this fable, therefore, of

* I think it highly probable that the following exquisite little lament was written at this time, and on this occasion.

Lunge da voi, ben mio!

Distant from thee, my Love, I have, alas!
Nor life, nor heart,—I am not what I was;
But a dim shadow, a lamenting sound,
A weeping echo struck from ruins round!
It is thy gift, but such the agony,
That my soul sickens, and I long to die!

the poor lover, whom he pretends to serve as an interpreter of his sentiments, must be regarded as an invention devised to operate upon her feelings in a like manner with the testamentary appeal, when he parted for France. "In a word," says Ginguené, "I regard as one of the clearest proofs of the passion of Tasso for Leonora, what the good Abbé Serassi has given as a testimony, *which ought to end all doubts*, of his indifference and coolness to her."

The evidence thus cited must be, I think, sufficiently conclusive; but there is one other composition addressed to Leonora of Esté, more beautiful perhaps than all the rest, and of a more peculiar importance, from the admission it contains with reference to the verses he addressed to other beauties. It is entitled in his "Rime,"

THE HURTFUL COLDNESS.

Allor, che ne' miei spirti intepidissi.

When the blest heat grew cold which thou, sweet flame!
Shed'st in my eagle spirit, I became
A hoarse dull bird of the' vale, and life has been
A wearying burden or a worthless scene.
Since—I of love have nothing writ nor sung,
Or if some ditties have escaped my tongue
In truant sport, I oft have felt disdain
For the attempts, and thou no noble strain
Hast heard, no lyric e'er to be renowned,
But feeble chatterings of a vacant sound.
I am but a discordant lute, but like
The' unvalued lyre which all chance-fingers strike,
Learned or unlearned, and which in various tones
Now mildly murmurs, and now harshly moans.
And sweet alone in thy enchanting name
Sounds the dear song; and only when I frame
My thoughts to Love, illumined by the fire
Of thy bright eyes, does Love the words inspire.

How far Leonora corresponded to this ardent love, must ever remain an inscrutable mystery. We only know, that to whatever degree she requited it, it was insufficient to satisfy his high ambition. "Sure I am," says the unhappy man soon after his imprisonment, in a letter to Gonzaga, wherein he describes the horrors of his gaol, "sure I am, that if she who has corresponded so little to my attachment were to see me in such a state, and in such affliction, she would have some compassion on me!" This was, however, written whilst he was smarting under the recent infliction of intolerable wrong,—and has been suppressed by Serassi, because *some* correspondence of attachment it distinctly proves. Little as it might seem to poor Tasso at this crisis, it was doubtless greater in reality than he was aware of, it being the policy, and perhaps the prudence of woman, to conceal from the aspirant to her heart the full strength of the emotions with which he may inspire her. But, as Love burns necessarily out, without some ray of hope, however slight, to enliven it, we may safely conclude that there were many gracious tokens on her part shewn from time to time, to preserve in the soul of her admirer for seventeen years a passion fervent as at first. Of this in his smaller poems there are many scattered indications, but in no instance is it more visible than in the following short composition, which has to the fancy all the truth of anecdote.

THE AMOROUS ACCIDENT.

Stava Madonna ad un balcon soletta.

My lady at a balcony alone
One day was standing, when I chanced to stretch
My arm on hers; pardon I begged, if so
I had offended her; she sweetly answered,

"Not by the placing of thy arm hast thou
Displeased me aught, but by withdrawing it
Do I remain offended!" O fond words!
Dear little lovewords, short, but sweet, and courteous;
Courteous as sweet, affectionate as courteous!
If it were true and certain what I heard,
I shall be always seeking not to' offend thee,
Repeating the great bliss: but, my sweet life,
By all my eagerness therein, remember—
Where there is no offence, there must be no,
No visiting of vengeance!

A circumstance of this nature, how long would it not remain engraven on a lover's mind: what hopes would it not reasonably excite, what fears not dissipate: how clearly would it not speak to his heart of esteem and ripening attachment! This is not however by any means the only proof cited of his Lady's grace. Those slight signs of emotion in the countenance or the behaviour, trifling to all but a lover, but all-eloquent with him,—"the graceful inclination of the head, the sweet look that says, 'I glow in the flame,' the blush across the face, the melancholy sigh, the joyous smile,"* all were treasured up in his bosom, and recorded in his verses.

From the poet's enumeration, however, of his amorous troubles, no less than from his frequent complaints of his Lady's severity, I am ready to believe that Leonora might be at all times on her guard to prevent the testimonies of her peculiar esteem from being remarked by the jealous court in which she lived, and that she was often induced to call up a passing frown, in order to baffle observation, or to mitigate presumption. She must have been well aware of the precipice on which she stood in the indulgence of any marked partiality towards a dependent of her brother's court, when she had refused the hand of princes, when she called to mind the imprisonment to which her mother had been consigned on renouncing Catholicism, and finally, Alphonzo's pride of rank, and bitter persecution of those who once in reality offended him. These remembrances, to say nothing of the prudential considerations suggested by womanly reserve, must have induced her to act with extreme caution in bestowing her encouragements. As to the imputed indifference which the Princess is supposed to have exhibited for the misfortunes of Tasso, and the little effort she made to obtain his liberty, with the conclusion which some would thence deduce, that her heart was never interested in his behalf, "this," observes Foscolò with great truth, "is one of the negative arguments founded on a hypothesis that may be easily destroyed by a thousand others equally plausible. Was not the Princess anxious to avoid her own ruin? In taking too warm an interest for the poet, did she not risk destroying herself without saving him? A poet who dared to love a princess of Esté, and a princess who had encouraged him, were, in the view of Italian statesmen, scandals which could not even be spoken by any, without rendering them guilty of high treason."†—But on what ground do these suppositions rest? what proofs are there that Leonora did not exert her utmost influence to lighten his calamities and terminate the horrors of his captivity? His continuance in prison? Nothing is more likely than that he whose mind was rankling with resentment whose bosom was proof alike to the pathetic appeals of the poet and the entreaties of sovereign princes, would turn a deaf ear even to a sister's intercessions. That she did intercede for him is sufficiently clear from a remarkable expression in his Canzone to the Princesses. "Chi mi guidò," he exclaims, in allusion to the star whose influence had attracted him twice to Ferrara, in despite of the urgent remonstrances of his friends,

* Rime.

† On the Lyric Poetry of Tasso; *N. M. Mag.* for Oct., 1822., p. 378.

"*Ove mi trovo.*
Chi mi guidò? ——
Lasso! chi m' affidò, chi mi eluse?"

"What star
Guided me hither?
And who, alas, when I for freedom grieved,
Promised me hope, yet still that hope deceived?"

The whole tenor of the compositions we have cited, all the presumptions of probability, and all the arguments of reason, concur to answer, Leonora.

Tasso, however, the ever sanguine, and ever disappointed Tasso, notwithstanding the inefficacy* of his appeals to her tenderness and pity, seems to have long cherished the remembrance of her kindnesses and virtues; and it was doubtless on a review of their mutual affection, after the poignancy of his affliction for her loss had been softened by time, that the following lines were written.

THE MEMORY OF PAST LOVE.

Dolce animetta mia.†

My life, my dulcet little soul! oh when
Shall I return to the dear spot, or near it,
Where we were so conjoined, and so divided?
But a fond glance of the eye, a pleasant smile,
A courteous salutation, a kind nod,
Two blessed love-words, and two sighs, shall be
Of my so long, long sufferings the reward.—
Or rather the fresh tortures,—ties, bonds, chains,
Torches, and darts, and arrows, to transfix,
Bind, and inflame me still!

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE DEATH OF LEONORA TO HIS OWN DECEASE.

A.D. 1581—1595; æt. 37—51.

Tasso had now been two years in confinement, with no farther mitigation of the calamity, than the removal, a few months before Leonora's death, to a somewhat more comfortable apartment, where, to use his own expression, he could philosophise and walk about. His former dungeon had been terrible enough, situated as it was below the ground floor of the hospital, damp, and dimly lit from above by a grated window from a small yard, about nine paces long, between five and six wide, and about seven to the roof, which was vaulted.‡ It was from this dreadful cell that he addressed to Alphonso and the two princesses the pathetic Odes which have been quoted, and which, for the honour of humanity, I am willing to hope had some effect in producing the desirable change. To the greater commodiousness which this new apartment possessed in size over the former, may be added that of admitting from its window on high the cheerful sunshine and fresh air. The following verses

* I should perhaps have said "little efficacy," since it is by no means improbable that Tasso's removal to a more comfortable cell was the result of her intercessions.

† It has been out of my power to make room for the originals of all the verses I have translated: but having given the commencing lines, I invite the Italian reader to an attentive perusal of them.

‡ Such is the description of the cell shewn to this day as the spot of Tasso's imprisonment.

to Alphonso present a picture of his feelings, shortly after his removal thither.

TO THE DUKE OF FERRARA.

Me novello Ission rapida aggira.

Me, like a new Ixion, the swift wheel
Of fortune whirls around, and, high or low,
Exasperates evermore my pangs; for oh,
With looks upraised to the high bars that seal
My bounded sight, through which the sunbeams steal,
And glad from rustling leaves the breezes blow,
I have burned, languished, prayed in songs of woe,
Yet still no mild concession has the' appeal
Won from thy wrath! now, in this den profound,
My pangs and ancient malady are grown
Sharper than axes on the whetstone ground.
Change then, O great Alphonso, not alone
My cell, but doom; and if the Fates decree
This revolution, let me move round thee!

To this application no answer was returned, and it was doubtless under the indignation excited by such neglect, that he composed his sublime appeal

TO THE SPIRIT OF HERCULES II. DUKE OF FERRARA.

Alma grande d'Alcide, Io so, che miri.

Spirit celestial! well I know
Thou mark'st the rigour of thy race,
Who in unwonted modes of woe
Turn from me, with disdainful face.

Their angry frowns, my tuneful tears
Thy warm regards, I know, have won;
From thy blest seat above the spheres,
The wandering stars and glorious sun;—

Ministrant to thy loved behests,
Command some messenger to fly,
And breathe in their resentful breasts
The breath of warm humanity.

Sound in the' Oppressor's heart, "Why so
Degenerate grown, my son, from me,
Shaming his worth, whose love below
Bequeathed such dignity to thee?

"*Thou* mild? *thou* just? to truth! to right!
To Heaven's own voice, injurious man!
Wilt thou be ever deaf, and slight
The music of thy murmuring Swan?"

The apathy of Alphonso rendered others callous to the poet's claims for pity, and encouraged several to repeat the piracy of Malaspina. Ingegneri was the first of these. He was, it is said, desirous of vindicating his friend's glory, endangered by Malaspina's mutilated edition, and for this purpose transcribed an authenticated copy, of which he published at the same time two impressions, the one at Casalmaggione, the other at Parma,* and dedicating them both to Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, became both patronised by this prince, and enriched by the speculation. There is nothing to induce us to believe that Tasso was at all the gainer by this "vindication of his glory:" we only know that the two editions were sold in a few days; that Malaspina, surpassed by Ingegneri, surpassed him in his turn, in giving a new edition after a more complete copy,† and in shortly after renewing the edition, which he managed to make yet more

* The first n 4to, th secon in 12mo.
† Venetia, 1581, 4to.

correct and profitable,* without even consulting the author concerning it. Finally, a young Ferrarese attached to the court, and one of Tasso's intimate acquaintances, undertook to publish a new edition of the "Gerusalemme," superior to all that had hitherto appeared. Febo Bonna, this new editor, had the advantage of consulting the original manuscript, as well as the author himself, and his edition made its appearance at Ferrara, dedicated to the Duke Alphonso, and was presented expressly to that Prince in the name of the unhappy author. But the haste with which it had been prepared for the press having been the means of introducing several errors, the same person immediately produced another impression,—the first, according to Fontanini, that could be regarded as correct. Even this was surpassed, three months after, by the Parma edition, in which the "Gerusalemme Liberata" appeared as it now remains, and which served as a model to all subsequent editors.† Thus in the course of a single year, seven editions had made their appearance; one of which, we know, from Ingegneri's admission, was to the extent of 1300 copies, and some of the others were probably equally numerous. In the following year six more editions saw the light, and, in short, the diligence of the printers could scarcely keep pace with the avidity of the public.

In the midst of this great glory, whilst all Italy rang with praises of his poem, and whilst the editors and booksellers were enriching themselves with the fruit of his long years of labour, poor Tasso was languishing in cruel captivity, neglected by the Prince who should have protected his interests, persecuted in a hundred petty ways by his inhuman gaoler, destitute of the most necessary comforts, reduced to beg, during the vintage which enlivened all Ferrara, for a small supply of wine, not so much to fill his heart with gladness, as to deaden the weight of his affliction. The Sonnet in which he makes this request is no less beautiful as a composition, than interesting as a biographical document.

TO THE DUKE ALPHONSO.

Col giro omai delle stagioni eterno.

Now in the Seasons' ceaseless round, the Earth
Pours forth its fruits; the elm sustains with pride
The ripe productions of his fruitful bride,
To whom the smiling suns of spring gave birth:
In luxury now, as though disdaining dearth,
Bursts the black grape; its juice ambrosial flows;
Wherefore so tardy to console my woes?
The rich Falernian sparkles in its mirth!
This with its generous juice the generous fills
With joy, and turns my Lord's dark cares to bliss
Not so with mine; but o'er my various ills
It pours the dews of sweet forgetfulness,
Inducing blest repose; ah, let me find
This slight relief, this Lethe of the mind!

Tasso, however, felt less the privation of such genial comforts than the wrongs inflicted on him by the various editions of his works. "I have been wronged," says he, in his letters, "or rather oppressed, as every body knows, though no one will acknowledge it. This oppression, too, is of that sort which weighs the heaviest, I mean in my studies, and the fruits of my labours. Of my 'Godfrey' alone, more than 3000 ducats have been already made, as I am credibly informed....Febo is very avaricious; after having published my book, he feasts in Paris among dames and knights, without giving me any share of the

* Venetia, 1582, in 4to.

† The edition of Mantua in 1581, printed after corrections by Scipio Gonzaga, may be specified as an excellent one; Serassi thinks it the best The Parma edition, however, excels it in some respects.

profit, although he engaged to do so by a written note. Had I allowed my poem to be printed three years ago, I should have gained at least many hundred scudi, and indeed, for this purpose 1000 scudi were offered me by one of the lords of Este....I am with the booksellers the good Tasso, the dear Tasso, the darling Tasso, and, in fact, the assassinated Tasso; but I am resolved that things shall go forward in a different manner." Shut out, however, by the bolts of his prison from all available interference, the booksellers smiled at his threats, and continued their golden speculations.

"But though Tasso," says Dr. Black, "derived no immediate emolument from his poem, the publication of the work appears to have been of use to him. His reputation, till now had been rather a concession than a right, and even those who had examined his poem could not be certain of the extent, nor perhaps of the justice of their approbation, without the concurrence of that very public whose opinions they directed. One of the causes of Alphonso's suspicions was removed by the publication of the "Gerusalemme," and, as its author was viewed by the public with greater respect, he was treated in the hospital with more attention." Some additional chambers were resigned for his use, on the urgent solicitation of his old and dear friend, Scipio Gonzaga. He received, too, several agreeable attentions, which relieved the monotonous sadness of his solitary cell. The Duchess d'Urbino sent one of her gentlemen to salute him in her name, and promised him that it should not be long before he obtained his freedom. Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Lord of Guastalla, a great admirer of his poetry, sent him a present of fifty scudi; and the beautiful Marfisa of Este, cousin to the Duke, and Princess of Massa and Carrara, demanded permission to conduct him for an entire day to her country-seat, where, amongst other ladies celebrated for their genius and beauty, he again met the poetess, Tarquinia Molza. But the entire year rolled round without any change of the nature he most ardently desired; and, sick with the pangs of disappointed hope, he thus writes:—

TO SCIPIO GONZAGA.

Scipio, pietate è morta, ed è bandita.

Pity is dead, or banished, O my friend,
From princely breasts, and in the heavenly spheres
With lost Astræa dwells, or to their ears
My mournful cries and clamours would ascend!
Shall then the promises which kings extend,
My liberty's best pledge, be laughed to scorn?
And the sharp pangs with which my heart is torn
'Twixt dead and dying, never have an end?
See me, a breathing corse, alive entombed!
These dens unclose but to let out their dead;
O gods! if skill, if genius, love illumed
By holy honour, and if faith unfled
Deserve reward or pardon, grant my prayer
Be no delusion, nor dispersed in air.

The principal event which happened relative to him, in the year 1582, was the publication of his "Rime," corrected by Guarini, who, although by no means on good terms with our poet, admired his talents, and pitied his misfortunes.

Whilst his health allowed of the exertion, the studies of Tasso were interrupted only by the visits of learned men, attracted to his cell by the fame of his writings,—or by letters from Naples, from Rome, and other principal cities, charged with attestations of the effect which his poem continued to produce, or, finally, by promises of enlargement, reiterated from time to time, but whereof the fulfilment was ever distant.

The year 1583 passed over in like manner; but at length the solicitations

of Cardinal Albano, the Duchess of Mantua, and other personages in high consideration with the Duke, became so pressing, that one day he caused Torquato to be sent for, and, in the presence of several French and Italian chevaliers, spoke to him with courtesy, and positively promised him his liberty in a short time. Meanwhile he ordered his confinement to be less limited, and permitted him occasionally to go abroad, accompanied, however, by some one gentleman in whose vigilance he could confide. Invited, on these occasions, to the first houses in Ferrara, Tasso again enjoyed one of the pleasures which he always much affected, that of philosophical conversation on literary subjects; and we find, in many of his Dialogues composed at this period, traces of these interesting discourses.* During the Carnival, two of his friends conducted him to see the masquerades, a species of amusement which he always highly enjoyed; but having one day manifested the strongest reluctance to return to his gloomy gaol, these agreeable recreations were, before the close of the year 1584, all forbidden, and Tasso fell back into the same solitude, the same privations, and the same despair as before.

It was in this deplorable state of his affairs, that the war arose against his Poem, which was carried on for a time in Italy with so much fierceness. A Dialogue on Epic Poetry, entitled, "Il Carrafa," published by Camillo Pellegrini, in which the author appeared to prefer the "Gerusalemme" of Tasso to the "Orlando Furioso," operated as a prelude; and the Academicians della Crusca, as they styled themselves, little pleased with certain expressions used by Tasso in his dialogue on "Honest Pleasure," were the first to take the field, with a defence of Ariosto,—the supposed production of one Lionardo Salviati, a literary character who had been formerly treated by Tasso in the kindest manner, but who, needy and involved in debt, scrupled not now to attack his benefactor, in the hope of attaching himself to the court of Ferrara, of which city Ariosto was the peculiar glory. Into this dispute, highly honourable as the narrative would prove to the moderation and modesty of Tasso, it is not my intention to enter. No importance, in the present day, can be attached to a controversy originating in such motives, fomented by a party so obscure,† and carried on, now with intemperate scurrility, and now with passionate abuse. Tasso replied with dignity to his assailants, Pellegrini nobly supported him, time passed on, and their criticisms are forgotten.

During the late controversy, the means of obtaining his liberty occupied, much more than the defence of his poem, the mind of the melancholy captive. He had exhausted the interest of the most powerful personages. Pope Gregory the Thirteenth, Cardinal Albano, the Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, the Duke and Duchess of Urbino, the Duchess of Mantua, several princes of the house of Gonzaga, and above all the faithful Scipio, had in vain solicited Alphonso on his behalf. The city of Bergamo, the birth-place of his father, was last invoked, and addressed to the Duke a petition for his freedom, presented by one of its most distinguished citizens, who added strength to the request by the gift of a marble inscription interesting to the family of Esté, which it had long been desirous to possess. Alphonso promised every thing, but the gates of St. Anne, unbolted not to his command. Was his vengeance not satiated by seven years of severity inflicted? If it were, what could be the cause of this

* In "Il Beltramo," or of Courtesy; "Il Malpiglio," or of the Court; "La Cavaletta," or of Tuscan Poetry; "Il Ghirlinzone," or of the Epitaph.

† The Academia della Crusca was at this period composed of but very few persons (six was the number in 1582), not one of whom had any name in literature, excepting Salviati. The controversy with Tasso raised them into eminence, and afterwards, being joined by men of real merit, they produced some works truly honourable to their nation, amongst which may be particularised their "Vocabolario."

cruel prolongation of his victim's sufferings? "Truly," says Serassi, with the tone of an humble apologist, "the Duke would willingly have yielded to so many intercessions, and have given Tasso his liberty, but, reflecting that poets are by nature an irritable race, and dreading lest Tasso, when he found himself free, might avenge with an arm no less formidable than his pen, his long captivity and unmitigated hardships, he could not bring himself to the resolution of dismissing him from his States, without being first assured that he would attempt nothing against the honour and respect due *to so great a Prince as he was!*" *

Both the physical and mental powers, however, of the object of these despicable apprehensions were fast declining. That ardent head which solitude kept in a state of constant fermentation, was exalted in its fancies, as his body became feeble. To the visitations of dark melancholy, or of the light delirium which he had often experienced in these attacks of frenzy, acknowledged as such in his letters, but which never once mounted to that madness into which it was pretended he had fallen, were now added almost habitual visions, and vexations from a Folletto, or haunting Sprite, which, he fancied, found a pleasure in disarranging his papers, flying off with his money, and in a thousand other mischievous tricks,—he was troubled, besides, with strange apprehensions, and nocturnal apparitions, and lights and glittering sparkles that danced before his eyes; sometimes he heard the most frightful noises, and at others had in his ears the sounds of hissing, tingling, ringing of bells, and the ticking of a clock. Often in his sleep he was tormented with fantastic visions of distress, from which he awoke fatigued and languid. "I have dreaded," he writes, "the falling-sickness, apoplexy, and blindness. I have had headaches, and pains of the intestines, the side, the thighs, and legs; I have been weakened by vomiting, dysentery, and fever. Amidst so many terrors and pains, there appeared to me in the air the image of the Glorious Virgin with her Son in her arms sphered in a circle of coloured vapours, so that I ought by no means to despair of her grace." "And though this," he adds, "might easily be a phantasy, because I am frantic, disturbed by various phantasms, and full of infinite melancholy; yet, by the grace of God, I can sometimes withhold my assent, which being, as Cicero remarks, the operation of a sound mind, I am inclined to believe it was in reality a miracle." It is impossible to contemplate without emotion, so many sufferings sustained by so great a genius, such religious faith, and such perfect simplicity.

Of the Virgin's miraculous interference, he was yet more firmly persuaded soon after. Attacked by an alarming fever, on the fourth day the physicians began to fear, and, on the seventh, to despair of his life: reduced to such a state of debility as to be unable to bear any medicine, or even to sit up to receive it, "he recommended himself," says Serassi, "to the intercession of the most blessed Virgin, our Lady, and that with such confidence, and ardent devotion, that the compassionate Virgin appearing to him, visibly cured him, and as it were instantly restored him to health." A vow of pilgrimage to Mantua and Loretto testified his gratitude as a devotee, a sonnet and a madrigal as a poet.

Another miracle yet more singular, was, that Alphonso, apprised of the deplorable state to which he had reduced this great man, at length ceased to afflict him; "not," says Ginguenè, "that he was touched with pity, but that he had found the guarantee which he was looking for, to become just, or rather, to cease from being cruel." The Prince of Mantua, Vincenzo Gonzaga, whose sister he had married, resolved to demand of him the person of Tasso, promising on his honour to retain him at Mantua, and to secure

* This passage is otherwise expressed by Ginguenè; "j'ai craint," he says, "de rendre le petit duc de Ferrare trop ridicule."—*Hist. Litt. d' Italie*, tom. v. p. 267.

Alphonso from reprisal. On these conditions, the Duke consented to his liberty about the end of June; but his friend Constantino was obliged to use the utmost caution in breaking the tidings to him, lest the transport should too fatally affect him. On the 5th or 6th of July then, 1586, after a dreary captivity of seven years, two months, and a few days,—a period which, measured day by day, cannot even be reflected on without horror, the gates of St. Anne's unfolded to their captive, and he bade adieu for ever to his bolts and dungeons. He departed eagerly from Ferrara, with the Prince his liberator, without having obtained from Alphonso the interview of reconciliation, which he both requested and ardently desired. Those who know any thing of the human heart, will be at no loss to account for this refusal.

"Historians, however," says Foscolò, "will be ever embarrassed to explain aright the reasons of Tasso's imprisonment; it is involved in the same obscurity as the exile of Ovid. Both were among those thunderstrokes that despotism darts forth. In crushing their victims they terrified them, and reduced spectators to silence. There are incidents in courts, that, although known to many persons, remain in perfect oblivion—contemporaries dare not reveal, and posterity can only divine them." * Even Tasso himself was by no means certain of the exact cause, attributing it at one time to the anger of the Duke of Tuscany, at another to the Cardinal of Esté, and again, but with more decision, to the violent expressions which he had used against Alphonso. One thing, however, seems established by Dr. Black, that there is no real foundation for the hypothesis which ascribes it to Tasso's love for Leonora. The grounds with which the statements of Manso furnished the world for this its long belief, were strengthened by the duration of the poet's captivity, which appeared proportionate only to an implication of state treason. This conclusion, however erroneous, must be admitted to have been a most natural one, for no one possessing a spark of humanity could deem it possible that a gentleman of Tasso's deserts should be subjected to such cruelty, for anything short of some such mortal offence, much less, then, for a few unguarded expressions uttered in the paroxysm of passion, and deplored almost as soon as uttered. Such, however, seems to have been the real case; for anger was not with the Duke of Ferrara, as with generous and noble natures, a fire that consumes with a quickness proportioned to its intensity; but "the slow flame, eternal and unseen," which, nourished by the jealousy of pride, finds in the very length of its duration a fresh incentive to burn on.† Nor indeed was his resentment to poor Tasso appeased even by his seven years' severity. In an illness with which the Duke was subsequently visited, Tasso wrote him a very affectionate letter, and in 1594, a short time before his own death, wrote a second time to request a reconciliation; Alphonso, however, remained implacable as the ghost of Ajax, and, like the ghost of Ajax, disdained the courtesy of a reply.

* Essay on the Lyric Poetry of Tasso.

† If any other fact were wanting to prove the unrelenting nature of this Prince's vengeance, it might be found in his persecution of Guarini. Guarini, after a sixteen years' devotion to his patron's interests, sometimes at Ferrara, and sometimes on foreign missions, finding that he was acquiring neither honour nor profit, demanded, in 1588, permission to leave his service, and, warned no doubt by the fate of Tasso, left Ferrara secretly by night—a step which exceedingly enraged the Duke. The poet retired to Turin, and in that city had an honourable office assigned him, which, however, from the persecution of Alphonso, he was soon compelled to quit, and betook himself to Venice. In 1593, five years after his flight from Ferrara, he was invited by the Duke of Mantua to his court, an advantage which the "magnanimous Alphonso" endeavoured by all means to prevent, signifying to that Prince, with a meanness truly astonishing, that he would consider it as a very high obligation if he would not employ the poet in his service.

With a knowledge of these facts, and after an elaborate and successful attempt to disprove the only cause that could furnish the Duke of Ferrara with the *shadow* of a justification for his rigour—viz. the aspirations of Tasso to the love of the Princess Leonora—it is not a little extraordinary to find his English biographer endeavouring to vindicate Alphonso from the charge of undue severity, and hesitating to pronounce whether anger at Tasso, or a real regard for his welfare, was the motive that influenced the merciful Prince, in consigning him to the dungeons of St. Anne's. "It is in prison, in solitude, in want of the most necessary things of life, in a provoking persecution and daily humiliation, it is from the hands of his gaoler and in the midst of spies, that Tasso is to regain his health and senses!" * The idea is too monstrous to be admitted for a moment. Even Muratori, who wrote at Modena under the patronage of the house of Esté, rejects the unnatural assumption. "How can it be," he exclaims, "I will not say possible, but probable, that a Prince of Alphonso's high-mindedness, from a desire to restore the health of so great and estimable a man as Tasso, should cause him to be shut up in a building common to paupers and madmen? Were there wanting to a Duke of Ferrara houses and means suitable for the retention of Tasso, as an infirm gentleman to be restored to health of body? Assuredly this hospital of St. Anne's must excite now, as it must have excited at the time, a just suspicion that the Duke confined and retained him for so many years in those abodes, under the plea, NOT MERELY OF CHARITY, BUT OF PUNISHMENT." † Let Alphonso have every merit ascribed to him that he can justly claim; let him continue to be regarded as the early benefactor of the poet, affording him an asylum when menaced by ill-fortune; although the disinterestedness of his subsequent attentions to the author of the "Gerusalemme" is open to suspicion, let us dismiss the suspicion from our minds, as well as our remembrance, both of his resentment in consequence of the poet's looking out for a fresh patron, and the unjustifiable detention of his manuscripts; let him enjoy without dispute the distinction of having fostered the rising genius of the greatest poet of his age, and of having treated him for a time, in the enthusiastic language of that poet's grateful heart, "with the affection not merely of a patron, but of a father or a brother:"—but never let an act of such atrocity as this seven years' cruel incarceration in a lunatic asylum, be glossed over with the sacred titles of humanity and mercy. In characterising this deed by its right appellation, there is no need to debase the dignity of truth, by adopting the invectives in which some writers have indulged; it will be sufficient for one who desires to record his pity for the agony of a noble mind languishing in long captivity, and his disdain at the tyranny of the man who could prostitute the power with which he was gifted for the gratification of private vengeance—to designate Alphonso, in the emphatic language of Lord Erskine, on a far less urgent occasion, as A SHAMELESS OPPRESSOR—A DISGRACE TO HIS RANK, AND A TRAITOR TO HIS TRUST! "Those," says a living writer, "who indulge in the dreams of earthly retribution, will observe, that the cruelty of Alphonso was not left without its reward, even in his own person. He survived the affections of his subjects, and of his dependents, who deserted him at his death, and suffered his body to be interred without princely or decent honours. His last wishes were neglected; his testament was cancelled. His kinsman, Don Cæsar, shrunk from the excommunication of the Vatican; and after a

* Foscolò. "Essay on the Lyric Poetry of Tasso." Dr. Black, after a long and laborious investigation of the great problem of his imprisonment, even ends by doubting, "whether Tasso was treated at all with unjustifiable harshness by Alphonso!" See the Appendix to his Life, vol. ii. p. 452.

† Lettera ad Apostolo Zeno.

short struggle, or rather suspense, Ferrara passed away for ever from the dominion of the House of Esté." *

Tasso's reception at the court of Mantua was such as to induce him in a short time to forget his past afflictions. The old Duke William gave him a beautiful apartment in his palace, furnished him with all conveniences and comforts, and caused him to be attended with a devotion equal to his wishes. These soothing marks of kindness were not, indeed, of efficacy to prevent his continuing to experience, from time to time the same visitation of melancholy and phantasy as before; but he, notwithstanding, resumed his literary labours, and completed, or rather entirely recast a tragedy which he had begun so far back as 1574, to which he gave the name of "Torrismondo, King of the Goths;" but it was not without much mental labour that he brought this production to an end. It was thus that, having escaped with difficulty from the rigour of a long and unjust captivity, this great man buried in oblivion all remembrance of his former persecutions, cherishing neither hatred nor resentment for the malice of men; but finding in the charms of his beloved philosophy a sufficient solace for the sufferings they had inflicted.

Thus passed the year 1586. The next two years were almost, so to say, one continual journey to and from Bergamo, Rome, and Naples, undertaken ever under sanguine hopes of advantage to his health, from change of air and novelty of scene, but seldom affording more than a temporary relief. On his way to Rome, he visited Loretto, and paid the vow which he had made to the Virgin in his sickness. He visited Naples in the hope of recovering his mother's dowry, and of again embracing his sister Cornelia. The former he eventually, with much difficulty, acquired by adjustment; but his sister Cornelia he was never more to see, as before his arrival at Sorrento, she was released from the cares and troubles of earth. At Naples our poet was invited by some of the most distinguished individuals of the court and city to take up his residence with them; but, determined by the beauty of the situation, and yet more by religious sentiments, which daily assumed over his mind a greater influence, he chose rather to abide with the monks of Mount Oliveto. It was here that he became acquainted with John Battista Manso, his after biographer, and the friend of Milton, of whose generous and devoted kindness we find in Tasso's letters a thousand proofs. Every thing that delicacy or invention could suggest, was tried by this excellent young nobleman, to beguile the melancholy of his friend. He drove him out in his carriage, amidst the enchanting scenery which surrounds the bay of Naples, assembled round him men of letters, who by their society and admiration of his genius might soothe and gratify his mind, and as the autumn advanced, varied his amusements with the disports of hunting and of dancing. "The Sig. Torquato," he writes in a letter to the Count of Paleno, "is become a very mighty hunter, and triumphs over all the asperity of the season and of the country. When the days are bad, we spend them and the long hours of evening in hearing music and songs; for one of his principal enjoyments is to listen to the Improvisatori, whose facility of versifying he envies, nature having, as he says, been in this point, very avaricious to him. Sometimes too we dance with the girls here, a thing which likewise affords him much pleasure." † This was certainly the kind of treat-

* Hobhouse: Illustrations of Childe Harold.

† There is rather a curious passage in one of Tasso's letters from Mantua in 1587, which shews with what fidelity he cherished his first love, notwithstanding his amorous susceptibility. "Here," says he, "is going on a most delightful carnival, where are abundance of beautiful and most graceful ladies. Never was I more displeased at not being a very happy poet than at present. Indeed, were it not for the fear of being considered either as too susceptible, or as inconstant, in making a new choice, I should already have deliberated where to repose my thoughts."

ment best adapted to charm away the malady of Tasso; and had similar means been employed at Ferrara, instead of harsh restraint and gloomy incarceration, his melancholy humour might then perhaps have been entirely subdued.

The principal idea upon which his mind, as connected with his malady, had been now for some time fixed, was that of being attended by a familiar Spirit, that would often manifest itself to sight, and join with him in high and benevolent communion. The Marquis endeavoured to persuade the poet, that it was nothing but the illusion of a disturbed imagination; but being invited by Tasso to be present at one of their mysterious interviews, his discourses were so lofty and marvellous, both by the sublimity of their topics, and a certain unwonted manner of talking, which exalted the hearer above himself into a kind of ecstacy, that Manso did not dare to interrupt them, nor to ask Tasso concerning the Spirit which he had announced as being apparent; and when the friendly Genius had vanished from the eyes of Tasso, and the conversation ended, Manso remained more perplexed than ever—acknowledging however, in one of his letters, that it was much more likely that the vision or frenzy would disorder his own mind, than that he should extirpate from the mind of his friend his true or fanciful opinion. "It is not impossible," says Dr. Black, "that a fond admiration of the writings of Plato, in which Socrates is represented as affirming that he had a familiar spirit, might have given this direction to the fancy of Tasso. He was for a long time employed in the composition of Dialogues, in which he himself was sometimes the Socrates; appearing in them under the name of the *Neapolitan Stranger*, as Plato disguises his master, or himself, under that of the *Athenian Guest*. And it was no wonder, both from the injured state of his nerves, and the long over-activity which the direction of his studies had given to the faculty of fiction, that with Tasso illusions should have become stronger than external impressions, and that he should have mistaken for realities his own diseased perceptions. In the weary solitude of the hospital, it was to be expected that a fancy naturally so vivid, and so continually indulged, should have at length, in a superstitious age and country, become so powerful as to mistake occasionally its shapes for substances. The deceptions which are occasionally practised with persons in his situation, were attributed by him *then* to the tricks of a goblin. *Now*, the direction of his fancies was altered; he was employed at leisure in the frequent composition of Socratic dialogues, and his mischievous sprite was converted into a familiar spirit, which taught him to 'soar with Plato to the empyreal sphere.'"*

In 1589, Tasso made a journey to Rome, and took up his residence with the monks of Santa Maria Nuova for several months; during the greater part of which time, he was tormented by a lingering fever. Whether he considered himself in this condition as burdensome to the good monks, or whether he was desirous of a change of situation, is uncertain; but in the November of this year, to the shame of the wealthy of that city, we find him lying infirm in the hospital of the Bergamese, of which (a remarkable and melancholy illustration of the caprice of Fortune), a cousin of his father's had been one of the principal founders. His residence, however, in the hospital continued but a short time, and he again returned to his former apartment in the monastery. Fortune seems now to have been weary of persecuting him, and after this last act of oppression, smiled on him more favourably till death, to which he tended in slow and serene decay, the evening of his course illuminated by friendship, and by the gratifying honours that were everywhere paid him. Upon a pressing invitation from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in 1590, who by his ambassador sent him a present of 150 ducats, Torquato visited his court, and was welcomed by him in the most affectionate manner. Every person too of note in Florence visited and complimented him, and crowds assembled round, to see, and hear

* Life, vol. ii. p. 242.

him speak. After having passed the summer here, he returned to Rome, loaded by the Grand Duke with fresh tokens of his esteem, and with rich presents. In 1591, he visited his benefactor Vincenzo Gonzaga, now by the death of his father, Duke of Mantua; in 1592, the Count of Paleno, at Naples. Magnificent apartments were here assigned him; numerous attendants were ordered to supply his wants; everything was so arranged, that he might consider himself a personage of the very highest quality; the prince behaved to him with the utmost affability; and thus comforted and honoured, the poet had leisure to resume the composition of his "Gerusalemme Conquistata," which, to satisfy the critics, he had begun during his first residence at Naples, but which his various sicknesses and journeys had long interrupted. He here brought it towards a conclusion, and in the December of 1593, it made its appearance at Rome. Its first success was flattering; but when the curiosity excited by its announcement was satisfied, the world returned generally to the first "Gerusalemme," a preference which succeeding ages have not failed to confirm. Tasso, however, continued to the last to prefer this second creation of his genius, as Milton preferred his "Paradise Regained," although in the sonnet which he wrote on completing the performance, he seems fully conscious that the fire which had animated his earlier efforts, was fast wasting away:

> "Tired and infirm with age, my toils to scale
> The heaven of Poesy proclaim how chill
> And changed a thing I am become! yet still
> Droops not the immortal mind, but from its goal
> Flies forth, and spurning every meaner view,
> Dwells on the pure, the beautiful, and true."

The "Gerusalemme Conquistata" was dedicated to the Cardinal Cinthio Aldobrandini, one of the nephews of Clement the Eighth, the reigning Pope, whose accession Tasso had celebrated in an Ode, which led to a pressing invitation to Rome from the Supreme Pontiff himself. Tasso, when he could disengage himself from the kindnesses of his friends at Naples, undertook the journey, and was received with open arms by Cinthio, who lodged him in his own apartments in the Vatican, neglecting nothing that might prove either advantageous to his health, or consoling to his mind. An aggravation of his disorders, however, in March, 1594, made him resolve to pass the summer at Naples, where he hoped to receive some benefit, no less from the baths than from change of air. With the permission of the Pope and of his nephews, he accordingly departed, and took up his residence in the Monastery of San Severino.

Four months he continued at Naples, in the enjoyment of his favourite studies, riding out when his health permitted, and visiting occasionally the Prince of Conca, and others, his illustrious friends. Impatient meanwhile, as the autumn drew on, for his return to Rome, Cardinal Cinthio ceased not to send the strongest solicitations for his society, and as a means of attracting him thither, obtained from the Pope a decree consenting to the ceremonial of his coronation in the capitol with the laurel crown, an honour which since the days of Petrarch had been conferred on no one. Tasso could not refuse an honour dictated by so delicate a friendship, although, personally, he seemed but little moved with the idea of the intended triumph. He even caused Manso to understand, in bidding him a mournful and prophetic farewell, that he should not live to enjoy the flattering tribute.

The arrival of Tasso at Rome took place about the 10th of November, 1594, He was met without the city by a splendid cavalcade, and in this manner escorted to the Vatican. On the following day he was admitted to an audience of the Pope, who received him benignantly, and after many praises of his worth and genius, said, "We have destined you the crown of laurel, that from you it

may receive as much honour, as in times past it has conferred on others." They would have made immediate preparations for the ceremony, but the season became very stormy, and as Cardinal Cinthio determined that it should eclipse all former pageants of the kind, and be enjoyed by the whole population of the city, it was deferred till the spring. Tasso, notwithstanding his constantly declining health, continued during the winter his usual studies, and completed his poem in blank verse, entitled, "Il Mondo Creato, or the Seven Days of Creation." Meanwhile the Pope had given him a proof of admiration and esteem more substantial than his eulogy, causing a bull to be expedited for granting him a pension of 200 scudi. The joy with which Tasso received this munificent gift, was yet farther increased soon after by the termination of his lawsuit; the Prince of Avellino, against whom his claim was found to lie, consenting, in consideration of his stopping the process, to grant him an annuity of 200 ducats, and a considerable sum in hand. To the blessings which were thus liberally showered down upon him, one only was wanting, the prospect of long enjoying them. This was wholly denied. No sooner had the month of April arrived, the period fixed for his coronation, than he felt to an insupportable degree an aggravation of his disorders. Perceiving that his end drew near, and only solicitous now to make suitable preparation for it, he demanded permission of the Cardinal to retire to the Monastery of St. Onofrio. His wish was instantly obeyed; Cinthio himself conducted him thither in his chariot, and left orders with the monks that he should be tended with all possible attention.

A few days after, finding himself yet more feeble, Tasso saw that it was time to bid adieu to the friend whom he had found most faithful to him, and wrote to Constantini the pathetic letter which no one can have read without emotion. "What will my dear Constantini say when he shall hear of the death of his dear Tasso! and in my opinion, the tidings will not be tardy. The close of life I feel to be fast approaching; no remedy can be found to assuage this new distemper which has joined my others; so that, as by a rapid torrent, I am borne away, without any thing to cling to, or to oppose its speed. It avails not now to speak of my relentless fortune, nor to complain of the ingratitude of the world, which has gained the victory of conducting me indigent to the tomb, while I fondly hoped, that the glory which (whatever it may think) this age shall derive from my writings, would not entirely leave me without reward. I have caused myself to be conducted into this Monastery of St. Onofrio, not only because the air of it is praised by the physicians as better than any in Rome, but also that I may begin at this exalted place, and with the intercourse of these devout fathers, my conversation in heaven."

On the 10th of April, Torquato was seized with a violent fever, which, although he was assisted by the best advice in Rome, so far increased, that on the seventh day, the physicians ceased their attempts to oppose it, and Tasso was informed that his last hour was at hand. He not only received the warning without alarm, but embracing the physician, thanked him for tidings so agreeable, and raising his eyes to Heaven, returned tender and devout thanks to his Creator, that after so tempestuous a life, he had now brought him to a calm haven. From this time he spoke not willingly on terrestrial subjects, not even of that fame after death, of which through life he had been most solicitous; but resigned himself wholly, and with the liveliest devotion, to the last solemn offices prescribed by his religion. After confessing with great contrition, and receiving twice the sacrament with a reverence and humility that affected all beholders, the Cardinal Cinthio hastened for the Papal benediction. "Clement," as we are told in a letter from Maurice Cataneo, "groaned and sighed over the fate of such a man, and granted him a plenary indulgence in remission of his sins," which honour

conferred alone on persons of high consideration, Tasso acknowledged with humility and gratitude, saying, "that this was the chariot upon which he hoped to go crowned, not with laurel as a poet into the capitol, but with glory as a saint to heaven." Having been requested to make his will, and to dictate something as an epitaph, he smiled and said, that as to the first, he had very little to leave, and for the second, a plain stone would be sufficient to cover him: he nevertheless desired his Confessor to mark down that he bequeathed to Manso his portrait, which had been painted by direction of that nobleman, and to the Cardinal Cinthio his writings and his little property. Of the Cardinal he begged with earnestness that he would collect together all the copies of his works, and especially of the "Gerusalemme," and commit them to the flames. Satisfied with the answer given him by the Cardinal, who was unwilling to embitter his last moments by a direct refusal, but who well knew that it was wholly out of his power to fulfil such a request, he entreated, since he had now obtained all that he could wish for in this world, that he might be left alone with the crucifix, and with one or two of the fathers to assist him in his devotions: whereupon the Cardinal bade him a fond farewell, and retired from the chamber, weeping bitterly. No one was afterwards admitted to him but his confessor and a few of the fathers, who by turns sung psalms, in which they were occasionally joined by Torquato, and when his voice failed, he ceased not steadily to contemplate the image of his Redeemer. Thus the night passed away; and at eleven o'clock of the day following, viz. April 25, 1595, feeling the approach of the mortal pang, he closely embraced the crucifix, and with the words on his lips, "Into thy hands, O Lord," resigned his peaceful spirit.

Such was the happy consummation of his most eventful life. All Rome deplored his death, and his friend the Cardinal Cinthio felt a melancholy pleasure in rendering those honours to him dead, which he was prevented from paying him whilst living. Robed in a Roman toga, and crowned with laurels, the body was exposed in public, and afterwards with a splendid attendance borne in state by torchlight through the principal streets of the city. Every one hastened to enjoy the last sight of the countenance of a man who had done so much honour to his age, and a throng of painters crowded round the corse, to fix for ever in their memory its pale and fading lineaments. The body was then carried back to the monastery, and on the evening of the day on which its spirit had departed, was interred with the usual obsequies, agreeably to his desire, in the church of St. Onofrio. The Cardinal Cinthio projected a magnificent monument to his memory, which, however, from indisposition and a ceaseless round of public and domestic cares, was never executed. The Marquis of Villa, visiting, five years after, the grave of his friend, earnestly entreated permission to grace the spot with a splendid tomb; but all that he could obtain from the Cardinal was, that a temporary marble tablet with a brief inscription should be placed by the monks over the poet's ashes, to mark where they were laid. Eight other years elapsed without any appearance of the Cardinal's fulfilling his intention; whereupon, the Cardinal Boniface Bevilacqua, a Ferrarese, assumed the honour to himself, and raised on the left of the entrance into the church an elegant and stately monument, which is still to be seen, bearing, beneath the effigies of the poet, a suitable inscription.

Tasso was of a stature so lofty, that, according to Manso, he might be considered amongst men even of large size, as one of the largest. His complexion had been exceedingly fair, but first studies and vigils, and afterwards misfortunes and infirmities, had made him somewhat pale. His head was large, and raised both in the forehead and occiput; in the middle, however, above each temple, it was rather depressed than round. His forehead was large and square, first rising to the middle, and afterwards inclining to the

hair, which time had in a great measure removed, rendering him almost bald. The colour of his hair and beard was a *mezzotinto* between brown and fair, inclining, however, towards dark; his eye-brows black, well arched, scanty, and disjoined. His eyes were large, and of a vivid blue, their gaze and motions full of gravity, and often, says Manso, directed towards the skies, as following the soarings of the mind within, which was generally raised to things celestial. His cheeks were rather long than round, his nose long and inclined towards the mouth, which was also large and leonine; his lips were thin and pale, his teeth white, large, and thickly set. He laughed but rarely, and when he did, gently and without any noise. His voice was clear and sonorous, but though his tongue was nimble, his conversation was rather slow than quick, and he was often accustomed to reiterate his last words. His figure, notwithstanding its size, was well proportioned, and his limbs were so active, that in exercises of chivalry, he was wonderfully expert; naturally brave, he shewed in cases of personal danger equal dexterity and courage,* but more address than grace; and, finally, he had in his whole person, but especially in his countenance, something dignified, noble, and attractive, which, even previous to a knowledge of his transcendent merits, inspired interest and commanded respect.

But his personal accomplishments were far surpassed by the qualities of his heart. All his historians concur in their praises of his candour, his inviolable fidelity to his word, his courtesy, his frankness, his freedom from the least tincture of revenge or of malignity, his attachment to his friends, his gratitude to his benefactors, his patience in misfortune, his mildness and sobriety, his purity of life and manners, his fervent and sincere piety. What was most irksome in his temper was a strange fear he had of being slighted, and a certain suspicious and mistrustful disposition. This, however, (though partly perhaps owing to his poverty, and his residence in a ceremonious court), must be principally attributed to disease and long misfortune. His high-spiritedness, which caused him to look with horror on all that resembled baseness, assumed at times the appearance of pride; he could not endure the least mark of unjust depreciation; but if he himself ever chanced to fail in any point of correct conduct towards others, he never scrupled to offer them every satisfaction, and to humiliate himself till the offended party lost all care for the offence. Born a gentleman, in an age when the term had all its high distinction, a finished chevalier in heart, no less than by the chance of birth, he rendered to the princes with whom he mingled, the honour due to their rank; but in all other respects he considered himself as their equal, and the privileges

* We have already recorded one instance of his personal intrepidity. Another, little less striking, occurred in his journey to Rome in 1592, attended with the most flattering compliment which it is possible to conceive. At Mola di Gaeta, the company with whom he travelled were stopped by the dread of one Marco di Sciarra, a most daring robber, and captain of a numerous troop of banditti. "We are here at Mola," writes our poet in one of his letters, "detained by the dread of Marco di Sciarra, who is in the neighbourhood, with a great number of ruffians. Yesterday, we are told, they killed many persons of this country; others they took prisoners, and, indeed, unless care be taken, this might turn out another war of Spartacus. . . . The other night, the whole country resounded with cries, and with the screams of females. I wished to go forward, and stain with blood the sword which you gave me, but I was withheld." On this occasion, in fact, there was no need of exerting his prowess. Sciarra, having heard that Tasso was at Mola, sent to compliment him. He offered him not only a free passage, but protection by the way, assuring him that he and his followers would be proud to execute his orders. Tasso rendered him many thanks, but declined accepting his protection; not from any doubt of his honour, but because he thought it would be indelicate to leave the gentlemen by whom he was accompanied. When Sciarra heard this, he sent notice that he would leave, on his account, the ways open for himself and friends; so that, without any farther obstacle, they arrived safely at Rome.

which they enjoyed, served only to render him, in their society, more scrupulous in exacting the respect that was his due.* He had the greater reason to foster this apparent pride, when he was visited by misfortunes, in order to preserve, during his long and unjust captivity, a dignity in sorrow. In the depth of his distress, from the solitude of his prison, he wrote to one of the greatest lords in the court of Ferrara, whom he fancied he had injured by some expressions which had escaped him in a moment of despair, that he was ready to offer him every satisfaction that could be received from a man resolved to die rather than to do anything that was unworthy of his character as a gentleman.

Simple, but neat in his dress, his common habit, even in his youth, was black, without the fantastic and luxurious ornaments usual in that age. He was fond of white and fine linen, of which he loved to make large provision, and which he wore plain, without lace or embroidery. In diet he was extremely temperate, and loved, as to taste, things that were sweet to the palate, such as candied fruits, cakes, and sweetmeats, and rich and piquant wines. His dislike to anything bitter approached even to horror, so that, notwithstanding his frequent illnesses, he could scarcely ever be prevailed upon to take any medicine that was not rendered agreeable to his taste.† His countenance, silent, modest, and reserved, was full of a mild but tragic gravity, resembling rather that of a philosopher than a poet. He preferred retirement and solitude to the bustle of the world; but in the circles of his choice, with friends, and above all, with amiable women, his conversation became highly animated, and, laying aside his philosophical gravity, he indulged in flights of pleasantry, with no less gaiety than grace. Manso has collected together a variety of *bons-mots* which he ascribes to him, but of these the greater number are shown by Serassi to be apocryphal: such, however, as belong indubitably to our poet, discover no less justness of application than liveliness of wit.

Of the merits and defects of the "Gerusalemme Liberata," and his other voluminous compositions, my limits forbid me to speak. Such as are desirous of critically considering them, may be referred to Ginguenè and Sismondi, who have both pursued the examination with candour, talent, and acumen. With respect to the intellectual endowments of Tasso, apart from his poetry, they were in the highest degree exalted and vast. His erudition was extensive, and, indeed, from some of his Dialogues would appear to have been immense. With the French and Spanish, to say nothing of the dead languages, he was well acquainted; he was deeply skilled in what that age considered as philosophy, and was almost equally well versed in mathematical science; nor does his English biographer scruple to say, that from the wonderful precision, and, as it were, sharpness of outline, which he gives to all his notions on the most

* "I cannot," says he, "live in a city where all the nobility do not yield me the first place, or allow, at least, that I should be their equal in every external demonstration of respect. This is my humour or my principle."—*Letter to Ascanio Mori.*

† "If," says he, in one of his letters, "you can procure the receipt for the conserve which Sig. Mercuriale wishes me to take, I shall be infinitely obliged to you. The more agreeable it is to the taste, I shall value it the more; because the excellence of medical men greatly consists, as you well know, in giving not only wholesome, but agreeable medicines." At what he says on another occasion, it is impossible to suppress a smile:—"I ought to be freed, that I may try what can be done for me by M. Alessandro da Civita, who formerly attempted my recovery in the court of Cardinal Albano. Never have I known a physician so kind and so discreet; he did nothing but what I wished, and always gave me (as is proper) only the most delightful medicines. I still remember with pleasure his sweet acidulous syrups, which might have revived a corpse, and his pills with gold, which he said were somewhat burdensome for the stomach."

abtruse and most mystical subjects, from the skill with which he announces, and the order with which he displays them, he thinks, that if Tasso had not been the Homer, he might, a few years subsequently, have been the Locke or Galileo of his age.

"Tasso," he continues to observe with his usual elegance, "was, as we have seen, possessed of all those virtues which might naturally have been expected from a laborious man, whose greatest pleasure was study, the art which he cultivated his ruling passion, and the glory of excelling in it his sole ambition. Numerous and bitter as were his foes, they seem to have been unable to charge him justly with a single moral stain; and, amidst many sufferings, he was at least exempted from the most bitter of all evils, the anguish of remorse. His name may be added to that of the other worthies, who have found, in the Christian doctrines, a subject of faith and consolation, and in its precepts a rule of practice. The darkness of his fate had a tendency to turn his views beyond this world, as night, which hides the earth, reveals the sky. Uniting, as he did, exercise of virtue to the ardour of devotion, the duties due to his Creator and to his fellow-men, we may hope, with his Italian biographers, that God, a bountiful remunerator, called him to himself, before his earthly coronation, to adorn him with a more true and incorruptible crown in the Heavenly Jerusalem."

LEONORA D'ESTE.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE LIFE OF TASSO.

BY JOHN DEVEY.

SINCE Wiffen wrote the foregoing biography, an important controversy has arisen in Italy with reference to the causes of Tasso's imprisonment and the nature of his connection with Leonora. Rosini, the Professor of *Belles Lettres* at the Pisa University, who had, between the years 1826-32, employed himself in editing the most accurate and complete edition of the poet's works that has yet appeared,* imagined that he had found the solution of the most mysterious passages in his extraordinary history; and published his views in a separate pamphlet, entitled "An Essay on the Loves of Tasso, and the Causes of his Imprisonment."†

The object of Rosini is to prove that Tasso was a favoured lover of Leonora; that his madness was simulated at the express command of Alphonso, with a view to neutralise the scandal that would naturally follow the rumour of the attachment; and that the poet was subsequently imprisoned when he broke all terms with the House of Esté, and resolved to comport himself as an independent subject. The evidence adduced in favour of these sweeping propositions is principally drawn from the poet's sonnets and letters: and though the passages would hardly be considered, in a court of justice, to support the inferences built upon them, they tend, nevertheless, when taken in conjunction with the entire circumstances of the case, to invest the theory of Rosini with a very high degree of probability.

That Tasso's sonnets to Leonora were something more than the mere *vers de societé*, which the gallant chevaliers of that age were constantly laying at the feet of high-born dames, is, we believe, past a doubt. That Leonora encouraged his affection is also as readily admitted. The only question is how far the lovers passed the boundary of a discreet Platonism. Now, Rosini thinks that the language of Tasso is pretty plain on this point. Thus, in one of his sonnets, the authenticity of which, as addressed to Leonora, Rosini has put beyond dispute, we find the lines:

> "Between the graceful neck and lovely waist
> I saw the heaving bosom sink and swell;
> And ever as its warm snow rose and fell,
> My fascinated eyes its beauties traced." ‡

Then we have the sonnet addressed to the Duchess of Urbino, but really written, as Rosini shows, for Leonora, whose claim the poet subsequently acknowledged by changing the inscription:—

> "The April showers, wherewith in youth's bright spring
> Kind Nature's hand the loveliest face has dress't,
> Are far less sweet than in thy *Royal breast*,
> The autumn fruits love's cares to ripeness bring.

* Opere di Torquato Tasso, colle controversie sulla Gerusalemme poste in migliore ordine, ricorrette sull' edizione Fiorentina ed illustrate dal Prof. Gio. Rosini. Pisa, 1826-32.

† Saggio sugli Amori di Tor. Tasso, e sulle cause della sua prigionia: da Gio. Rosini. Pisa, 1832.

‡ Son. 12, Tom I, Rime, ed. di Pisa. These lines were subsequently altered in the edition of Brescia, and the epithet "chaste" introduced, for the purpose of disguising the idea which Tasso had but too distinctly expressed.

"Bosom divine! the garden and the field
Of Love, and my terrestrial Paradise!
Who could curb down my fond thoughts as they rise,
But he whose only food thy pluckt fruits yield?"*

In the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth sonnets of the same edition† we find Tasso at the toilet of Leonora making prize of a riband, "a votive offering to love." When he departs, his return is eagerly desired by Leonora.

"If to go away,
She cried, delay not long the wished return,
And of my heart keep thou meanwhile each key."

Tasso in another place‡ swears to love her:—

"When those eyes and curls
Lose their far flashing light and golden hues."

And in a noble sonnet, which he wrote in his hideous prison, he distinctly alludes to this passion as the cause of his confinement:—

"And thus the noble name that Laura bore
Oblivion-wrapt will go, *and hers who wrought*
My joy and torment, and for whom I wore
Years out in bondage."§

Now, Rosini takes care that evidence of this character, which he adduces in more abundance than we have room to transcribe, be not explained away on the mere ground of fiction, by citing the testimony of the poet as to their reality. In an introductory sonnet, intended by Tasso to precede his lyrics, the poet speaks very frankly on this point:—

"True were the loves and transports which I sung
And over which I wept, in varied rhyme."‖

When we consider the light in which such attachments were regarded in Europe in the 16th century, as not only involving the party in treason who had dared to raise his thoughts so high, but all those who abetted him, and even bruited the circumstance abroad; and take in conjunction with this fact the haughty character of Alphonso, and the manner in which he contrived to get rid of his first Duchess; we shall not be surprised at the mode in which he treated Tasso, as soon as the intelligence of the attachment reached him. It appears that this occurred, if we may credit Tasso, by the treachery of the confidant whom the lovers entrusted with their secret.

"Since he, our once true messenger, no more
Our *mutual* sighs and our affections dear
Will bear—or our sweet strifes and quarrels hear
And subtily judge—as once he heard or bore,—
Rebel to love—cruel to us from fear—
Tost by the winds on air, I must deplore
My tender words, and deep in my heart's core
Its lofty secrets shut from mortal ear."¶

* Tom. I., Son. 134. Ed. di Pisa. In a later edition, "autumn" was changed for 'July." Notwithstanding the closing lines, it is hardly conceivable that the poet could intend a sonnet of this kind for the wife of one of his best friends.

† Tom. I., answering to Sonnets 8 and 9 of the Eterei.

‡ Tom. I., Son. 57. Ed. di Pisa, 16 of the Eterei.

§ Son. 431, p. 221, Tom. I. Ed. di Pisa. Laura was the name of Tasso's first love. It speaks little for the sagacity of preceding editors and biographers, that none of them made the least allusion to Laura before Rosini, although the poet addressed sixty sonnets to her.

‖ Rime, Tom. I., Son. 1. Ed. di Pisa.

¶ Tom. I., p. 91, Son. 172. Ed. di Pisa.

Tasso was at once hurried, by the Duke, to Belriguardo,* where Rosini states, on the authority of some passages in the poet's letters which refer to this circumstance, that he was ordered by his royal patron to feign madness, and comport himself like one labouring under a disordered imagination.† On the plea of having drawn a dagger on a domestic of the Duchess of Urbino, previous to his visit, he was transferred, on his return, to a neighbouring monastery, and placed under the care of two *frati*, who were instructed to regard the conversation of Tasso as the mere rant of a madman, and to keep it as secret as if they had heard it in confession. Tasso, as was very natural in those days, when poison and the stiletto were in so much request, fearing that worse measures might be taken, escaped to Naples.

From this time the madness of the poet became noised abroad, and it was the interest of the Duke of Esté that the report should be credited, and no pains were spared on his part to give it a colourable appearance. Respectable physicians were engaged in consultation upon the causes of the malady, with such evidence as the Duke of Esté chose to lay before them,‡ at a time when Tasso, by the composition of his dialogues and poems, was exhibiting the possession of the most marvellous powers of mind. Never, excepting in a few instances which occurred immediately after his visit to Belriguardo, when we may suppose that he was acting immediately under the Duke's instruction, did the poet afford any grounds for the imputation of lunacy: and it would be a mockery of anything like reason to place any faith in Alphonso's professions, that he incarcerated him in a monastery, and subsequently in a filthy prison for upwards of seven years simply to cure him of his disorder, when no physician in either case was permitted to approach him, and every means was used to aggravate the poet's sufferings. When Sophocles was accused of madness, and asked to show cause why he should not be imprisoned, he pointed to his Electra; Diogenes sufficiently confuted the elaborate argument of the sophist against the existence of motion, by walking round his tub; Tasso, more triumphantly, confronted the impugners of his sanity by the production of works, during every month of his imprisonment, which placed beyond dispute that he was in possession of the most gifted mind which appeared during the latter part of the 16th century.

What, then, was the real cause of Tasso's imprisonment? This is the most obscure part of his life, and one about which hardly two out of the crowd of the poet's biographers agree. Faustini ascribes it to the Duke's desire to cure Tasso of a fistula; Serassi to a few angry words which the poet used towards Alphonso on his second return to Ferrara. Black, who adopts Serassi's views in denying his love for Leonora, joins issue with him on the cause of his imprisonment, which he attributes to insanity. Muratori, who, along with Faustini and Serassi, was a pensioned officer of the House of Esté (now ruling over Modena), says Tasso was flighty, not mad, and professes himself entirely unable to divine the grounds of Alphonso's severity. Manso, who was a bosom friend of the poet, is in an equal state of perplexity; while Tiraboschi, the late librarian of Modena, ventures to deny his rigid confinement, and is profuse in his thanks to Alphonso for consulting "the honour, health, and advantages of Tasso in his retreat, who evinced his continual obstinacy by considering himself a prisoner." Wiffen follows Ginguené in attributing the poet's incarceration to his previous attempt to abandon the

* It is singular that all the biographers of Tasso, previous to Rosini, had regarded the poet's visit to Belriguardo as a proof of the continuance of the Duke's favour to him, and as evidence of Alphonso's ignorance of any love attachment.

† The passages are quite explicit on this point. Tasso says that the proposition was so unheard of, that the Duke was ashamed to express it in unveiled language.

‡ Black, in his Life of Tasso, has very absurdly taken up the subject, and entered into an elaborate disquisition on the poet's madness without stopping for a moment to inquire into the reality of the imputation.

service of the House of Esté for that of the Medici, and the spiteful temper of the Duke, inflamed by the hasty expressions of the poet towards him.

Nor does the reader meet with any elucidation of the mystery from the written documents of the poet which refer to the subject. When he thinks the poet, in his correspondence, is conducting him to the very passage which is to render up the secret, he encounters an ominous ——, or a variety of * * * *, which render further inquiry hopeless; nor can the original MSS. of these papers be met with in any library in Italy. Copies of them exist in abundance in which the same ominous blanks and asterisks occur; but when any request is made for the original, the traveller is told they have either been entirely lost, or that they disappeared during the repeated *bouleversements* to which Italy has been subject.* From this state of perplexity Rosini's theory is the only one that holds out any chance of escape, and is really considered by the unbiassed *literati* of Italy to have settled the question, at least until the original documents are forthcoming. It certainly fits into all the facts of the case. When Tasso returned to Ferrara the first time after his escape to Naples, the Duke refused to give up the poet's papers and books, and told him he must not return to his former studies, but submit himself to a course of medicinal treatment as one temporarily deranged. Tasso, not liking such terms, again fled, and was only allured back by promises of being restored to his former dignity. As soon, however, as he placed his foot once more in Ferrara, his course was watched. Every outlet of escape was shut against him, and he was subjected to such brutish usage by the menials of the palace, as to wring out of him expressions or lead him to a course of action, which might afford Alphonso a pretext for depriving him of his liberty. His apprehension was the result of a studied scheme, which began with the detention of his papers and library, and the overtures of a suitable provision for his accommodation, and ended with his incarceration in a mad-house, under the plea of curing his insanity.

Rosini's pamphlet was stoutly attacked, as soon as it appeared, by the partisans of the House of Esté † but without any result except such as afforded Rosini further ground for placing his views beyond cavil by triumphantly demolishing every argument brought against them ‡. Neither Cavedone nor Capponi, who took up the gauntlet in defence of the House of Esté, have shown much ingenuity in the service of their patrons. The first has recourse to the untenable plea of insanity, and thinks Alphonzo's course, on the whole, a humane one; while the latter repels, as an atrocious calumny on the poet's morals, his love for Leonora, and at the same time plainly asserts his passion for her married sister.§ This is the old defence of Black and Serassi. The scribes of the Esté family have been at great pains to screen the honour of that House, which they imagine soiled by the attachment of Tasso to Leonora, by shifting the object of the poet's passion to the Duchess of Urbino, forgetting that the guilt, if any existed, should cast a stronger imputation on their scutcheon in the case of the married than of the single sister. J. D.

15th March, 1854.

* The leading document of this kind is a letter of Tasso to the Duke of Urbino, in which he enters into a full explanation of the causes of his misfortunes. We recollect asking, very recently, the present librarian of Modena to indulge us with a sight of this important document. The courteous functionary was ready with the stereotyped reply: "C' est impossible; elle s' est disparue pendant la dernere Invasion Française de l Italie."

† Risposta al saggio di Prof. Rosini sugli Amori di Tasso &c. del Sig. Cavedone.

‡ Lettera di Gio. Rosini al sig. defendente sacchi a Milano sul saggio annunziato della causa finora ignota delle sventure di T. Tasso; del Sig. Marchese Gaet. Capponi. Pisa, 1837. Cavedoniane di Gio. Rosini in risposta alle accuse.

§ La Duchessa d' Urbino, del Sig. Cavedone da Modena. Pisa, 1851. Saggio Sulla Causa finora ignota delle sventure di Tor. Tasso, del Marchese Capponi. Firenze, 1840.

A LIST

OF SUCH OF

THE ENGLISH NOBILITY AND GENTRY

AS WENT ON THE CRUSADES.

Gathered from Abbas Gemetriensis, Annales Waverliensis, Benedictus Abbas, Brompton, Dugdale's Baronage, Henry of Huntingdon, Matthew Paris, Ordericus Vitalis, Robert of Gloucester, Roger de Hoveden, Vinisauf, William of Tyre, Du Moulin, Weever's Funeral Monuments, MSS. in the Ashmolean Museum, &c., &c.

*** From Du Moulin, who gives a full list of Norman Crusaders, I have selected such only as, by the evidence of Charters, I know to have possessed English fiefs. Where figures are affixed, they indicate the year of the reign in which the parties either went to the Holy Land, died there, or were engaged in some recorded conflict.

IN THE REIGN OF WILLIAM RUFUS.

ALBEMARLE, Stephen, Earl of—led the rear in the Battle of Antioch.
Atheling, Edgar, with 10,000 men from Scotland and its Isles.
Bardeville, Roger de, Lord of Rozel.
———, Robert de, his son.
Bayeux, Odo, bishop of.
Bruce, Rainer de.
Cheney, Walter de.
Courtney, Joceline, made himself Count of Edessa.
Fitz-Count, Brien.
Fitz-gerard, Bohemond's standard-bearer.
Guader, Ralph, E. of Norfolk and Suffolk.
Guader, Emma, his wife.
Montacute, Conon de.
———, Josceline and Lambert, his sons.
Percy, William de.
———, Everard de.
Peverell, Pain, of Brune, Duke Robert's standard-bearer.
Richmond, Auncell de, slain at Arches.
Rozel, Hugh de, Lord of Rozel, near Caen.
St. Amand, Odo de.
St. Metard, or Semarck, Hardwic de.
St. Valerie, Walter de.
Surdavalle, Robert de.
Tyrrell, Walter.
William, Archbishop of Tyre.

HENRY I.

ST. LIZ, Simon de, Earl of Huntingdon.
Vipount, Robert de, 8.

STEPHEN.

CLINTON, Roger de, Bishop of Litchfield, ancestor of the Earls of Lincoln, and present Duke of Newcastle, slain in the battle of Antioch.
Henry of Huntingdon, 10.
Lacy, Gilbert de, Knight Templar, surprised Nourreddin in his tent, and entirely defeated him.
Mansel, Robert, a native of Wales, assisted in the defeat of Nourreddin.
Mellent, Waleran, Earl of, 10
Mowbray, Roger de, 13, taken prisoner with Guy Rusignan.
Warren, William de, third Earl of Warren and Surrey.

HENRY II.

BAULD, Symon de, 20.
Beauchamp, William de, Earl of Warwick, 30.
———, of Eaton, Hugh de, slain at the battle of Tiberias, 33
Boves, Robert de.
———, Engelram de.
Lacy, John de, constable of Chester, 25.
Magneville, William de, Earl of Essex, 23
Neville, Alan de, Forest Justiciary, 12.
Patry, Robert, Lord of Lalande Patry.
———, Ralph, his brother.

RICHARD I.

Abelin, Nicholas de.
Agilon, Robert.
———, William de.
Albington, Philip de.
Albini, William de, third Earl of Arundel, remained with the King during his captivity.
Aleton, John.
Anselm, Chaplain to the King.
Apelfourd, William de.
Apuldorfield, Henry de, whose arms used to be shown by the Sexton of Lenham Church.
Arcedeacon, Adam de.
Audley, William de.
Aula, Nicholas de.
Autreve, William de.
Badelismer, Raffe de.
Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, with a train of 200 horse and 300 foot, his banner inscribed with the name of Thomas à Becket.
Balun, John de.
Bardolphe, Hugh and William.
Barkele.
Barnes, Raffe de.
Bassemes, Godfraye de.
Basset of Drayton, Ralph.
——— Symond.
——— Astell de.
Bassingborne, Waren de.
Beauchamp, John de.
———, Walter de.
Beff, Gifford le.
Beices Hameris.
Bethune, Baldwin de.
———, John de.
Beuchamp, John de.
Bevent, Adame.
Bigot, Earl of Norfolk.
Bikenor, John de.
Birmingham, William de.
Blanchmains, Robert, Earl of Leicester, 2.
Bodiham, William de.
Bokesle.
Boliere, Baldwyn de.
Bonet, Hamond de.
Borgheise, Hubert de.
Borgo.
Borne, John de.
Boton, Steven de.
Boun, John de.
Boves, Hughe de.
Boville, William.
Breouse, Philip de, 1.
———, William de.
———, Richard de.
———, Renald de.
Bruce, Ingram de.
Camoyes, John de.
Camvill, Robert de.
Camwell, Sir Richard de.
Cantelow, John de,
Carrington, Sir Michael, standard-bearer to the King.
Chamberlayne, William de.
———, Phylip de.
Champayne, Robert de.
Champernoun, Henry de.
———, John de.
Chaworth, Thomas de.
Chenegin, Robert, or Roger de.
Cheney, Alexander de.
Chevenam, Andrew de.
Clinge, William de.
Clyfford, Roger.
Cobeham, of Roundell, Henry de.
———, John de.
Cokefield, Robert.
Cokyntone, Henry de.
Colvile, Geffery de.
Corbet, Robert.
Cornwale, Robert de.
Cosinton, Stephen de
Covert, Roger de.
Creon, Guy de, 1.
Crespigny, William de.
Creye, Symon de.
Criele, Robert, and Nicholas de.
Cudham, Olyeer, and Robert de.
Dambesace, William.
Daras, Cheselin de.
Darcy, Norman.
Daubeny, Ralph, Philip, and William.
Despreux, William, saved the life of Richard, when surrounded by a squadron of Saracen horse, by exclaiming, "I am the King of England!" Richard ransomed him of Saladin by the exchange of ten emirs.
Dinant, Robert de, and Oliver.
Dotavile, Walter de.
Dufford, Robert de.
Eslynge, Raffe de.
Estornham, Bartholomew.
Estotevile, or Stutevilie, Robert de.
Eveby, Robert de.
Fenkeham, William de.
Feringes, Lucas de.
Ferni, Philippe de.
Ferrars, William, Earl of Derby, slain at Acon, 3.
———, Robert, Earl.
Fitz-Allen, John de.
———, Henry.
Fitz-Apuldorfeild, Henrye le.
Fitz-Geffray, gentleman of the bedchamber to Richard I.—to his care the captive King of Cyprus was committed.
Fitz-Gerald, Warine de, 2.
Fitz-Gerald, Morris.
Fitz-Humphrey, Walter.
Fitz-John.
Fitz-Lee, William.
Fitz-Nell, Robert.
Fitz-Parnell, Robert, fourth Earl of Leicester, bearing the arms of Richard I., unhorsed and slew the Soldan in tourney, 3.
Fitz-Roger, John.
Fitz-Walter, Robert, Lord.
Fitz-Warren, Fowlke de.
Flandres, Baldwyne de.
———, Constantine de.
Fortibus, William de, Albemarle, one of King Richard's admirals, 1.
Fouche, Roger de.
Furnivall, Girard de.
———, Thomas de.
Gatton, Hamon de.
Genville, Geffery.
Gifford, Osberne de.
———, Walter.
———, Elys.
Glanvill, Ranulph de, Lord Chief Justice of England under Richard I., 3.
Godfrey, brother of Henry III.
Gordun, Adam de.
Gosehall, Ralph de.
Gournay, Hugh de, divided the booty of Acon between Richard and the French king, 3.
Gras, Nicholas le.
Gray, Reginald and Richard de.
Grentemaisnil, William and Ivo de, 1.
Gyffard, Robert.

Gyse, Auncell de.
Hacket, Ralph de.
Hardres, Robert de.
Hastinge, John and William de.
Helyon, Walter de.
Hengham, Robert de.
Henry, William de.
Herice, Henry de.
Heringoe, William.
Hise, Nicholas de la.
Hornes, William de.
Huntingfield, Pierce and Cael de.
Hussy, Henry.
Ichingham, William.
Irie, Matthew de.
Kent, Thomas de.
Kyme, Philip de.
Kyrketon, Ralph de.
Laborne, William de.
Lacy, Roger de, 4.
La Haye, John de.
Lake, taken with Richard in Austria.
Lamare, John.
Langley, Geffrey de.
Lapole, Walter de.
Laroche, Guy de.
Lebnn, Nicholas de.
Leborne, William.
Legenne, William.
Levelande, Raffe de.
Lewkenor, Roger de.
Linet, Robert.
Lucenburth, William de.
Lucy Geffraye, or Godfrey de.
——, Emery de.
Lyle, Gerard.
——, Robert.
Lynnesey, Raffe de.
Macwire, William de.
Maili, Gylles de.
Malemeynes, Nicholas de.
Males, John.
Malet, Robert.
Malmaine, Henry de.
Malo, Roger, King Richard's vice-chancellor.
Maltrevers, Walter de.
Mandeville, Richard de.
Mantell, William de
Manvers, John de.
Marconvile, Raffe de.
Marely, Jebane de.
Marlet, Richard.
Marmes, Thomas de.
Marmion, William.
————, Phillipe.
Marshall, John de.
Maube, William.
Mauvoisin, Henry de.
Meremone, Geffrey.
Mingee, Adam de.
Moloun, Symone
Monhault, Adam de.
Monnile, Benedict.
Morston, Bartholomewe.
Mortimer, Robert.
Mountforth, Peers de.
Mountjoye, Esteven de.
Monvile, Gilbert de.
Mowbray, Nigil de, 3.
Munceus, John de.
Munchen, Stephen de, made one of the governors of Acon by the King.
Munchense, William de.
Munforte, Robert or Roger.
Muntein, Robert de.
Musard, Raffe de.
Muttans, Walter de.
Nell, Raffe de.
Neville, Hugh de, slew a lion in the H. L., first shooting him with an arrow, and then fighting him with his sword; he lies buried in Waltham Church, 4.
————, Robert de.
Neureford, William.
Nevylle, Lawrence.
Normanvile, Raphe de.
Northie, William de.
Northwood, Roger de.
Nunchams, Stephen de, brother to the Bishop of Ely, made one of the governors of Acon.
Odingselle, William de.
Okstede, Roland de.
Oldeham, Thomas de.
Ore, Nicholas de.
——, Richard de.
Orleston, William de.
Otigedene, Raffe de
Pancevot, Grymbolde de.
Parke, Henry de.
Paynell or Pagnel, William.
————, Thomas.
Pecham, John de.
Peche, Gilbert.
——, John.
Pembryge, Henry.
Penecester, Pynchester, or de Penshurst, Estephyn, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, under Edward I.
Percy, Henry de.
————, John de.
————, Everard de.
Perot, Raffe.
Peyfrer, William de.
Pierrepoint, Robert.
————, Symone.
Pesone, Nicholas de.
Peverell, Thomas.
Pigot, Henry, seneschal to Earl Warren and Surry.
Pipard, Gilbert, 1.
Plokenet, Alen de.
Poltimor, Lucas de.
Poynge, Lucas de.
Preston, William de.
Quincy, Robert de, Earl of Leicester, 2.
Ralle, Henry de.
Rochford, Ellis de.
Rode, William de.
Rome, Roger de.
Romilly, Ralph.
Roos, Robert de.
Sackville, Adam de.
St. Aubrey, Gilbert de.
St. John, John de.
St. Leger, William and Ralph de.
St. Quintin, Robert de.
St. Valerie, Bernard de, 2.
Sandair, Thomas de.
Santaver, Hugh.
Sautone, Bartholomew.
Savage, Ralph de.
Saye, William de.
Scotto, Robert de.
Scoveney, John de.
Scrope, Robert, of Barton.
————, Walter.
Sillingheld, John de.
Seintmore, Laurence de.
Sodan, Stephen de.
Somerye, Robert and Simon de.
Spencer, Hugh de.
Staverton, John de.
Stopham, Ralph de.
Strange, John le.
Sully.
Talbot, Roger de.
————, Gerard, one of the King's counsellors.
Tame, Richard.
Tamworth, Gyles de.
Tanquery, Bertram de.
Tilmaston, Roger de.
Traseme, Otho de.
Tregoz, Henry and John.
Tuithman, Alain de.
Tupigen, Walter de.
Turkeville, Hugh.
Tychesey, Thomas de.
Valoynes, Walrois de.
Vantore, John de.
Vaux, John de.
Vel, Robert de.
Verdun, Bertram de, one of the governors of Acon, 2
————, Theobald de.
Vescy, William de.

Viene, Lucas de.
Vile, Anselm de.
Wace, Roger le.
Wake, Baldwin de.
Waleis, Richard.
Wanton, William de.
Warburton, Thomas.
Warde, Robert de.
Welles, Simon de.
Wilton, Ralph de.
Witefield, Robert de.
Wodebite, Ralph de.
Wotingby, Bartholomew de.

JOHN.

Courcy, John de.
Ferrers, William de, son of the former Earl, 16.

HENRY III.

Albini Pincerna, William, fourth Earl of Arundel, 2.
——, Philip de, 6.
Argentine, Richard de, 14.
——, Reginald de, a Knight Templar, bore the standard in a great battle near Antioch, until, his hands and legs being broken, he was there slain, 21.
Audley, James de, 52.
Baliol, Eustace de.
Beauchamp, of Alcester and Powyk, Walter de, 53.
Bek, of Eresby, Anthony.
Blundeville, Ralph de, third Earl of Chester, 2.
Bohun, Henry, Earl of Hereford, 4.
Bohun, Humphrey, his son, Earl of Essex, 34.
Bruce, of Annandale, Robert de, 54.
Burnell, Robert, 54.
Chaworth, Pain, Hervey, and Patrick de, brothers, 54.
Clare, Richard de, Earl of Gloucester and Hereford, died at Acon, 24.
——, Gilbert de, Earl of Gloucester, his son.
Clare, Thomas, Gilbert's brother, took prisoners four Saracens, and brought them to England, 51.
Cornwall, Richard, Earl of, 56.
——, Henry, Earl of, his son, 56.
Dreux, John de, Earl of Richmond, 53.
Edward, Prince, son of Henry III.
Eleanor, his wife.
Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, youngest son of the King.
Ferrars, William and Robert, sons of the Earl of Derby.
Fiennes, William de, 54.
Gorges, Ralph de, 54.
Grandison, Otho de, Governor of Guernsey, 55.
Grey, of Codnover, Richard, 35.
——, Wilton, John de.
Harcourt, William, Baron, 5.
Huntercombe, William de, 54.
Huntingfield, William de.
Lacy, John de, Earl of Lincoln, 2.
Latimer, William, ancestor of the great Reformer, ·:
Leiburne, Roger de, 54.
Longspee, second Earl of Salisbury, 3.
——, William, his son, 24.
Loveli, Phillip. 34.
——, John, 54.
Lucy, Godfrey de, 20.
Marshall, Gilbert, Earl of Pembroke, 20.
Montalt, Roger de, 34.
Montfort, Symon de, Earl of Leicester, 34.
Plantagenet, Henry, second son of Richard, Earl of Cornwall.
Quincy, Saher de, Earl of Winchester. 2.
——, Robert de, his son, 4.
Segrave, Nicholas de, 54.
Tibetot, Robert de, 54.
Toney, Ralph de, 23.
Valence, William de, 34.
Vaux, Ralph de, 6.
Verdun, John de, 54.
Vesey, John de, 54.
Ufford, Ralph de, 54.
Willoughby, of Eresby, 54.

UNCERTAIN REIGNS.

Astley, Thomas de, of Warwickshire.
Avenal.
Bacon, William.
Barneville, Theodoric.
Beaumont, Robert de, second Earl of Leicester, surnamed Blanchmains
——, Robert de, third Earl, was taken prisoner, and paid 2,000 marks for his ransom.
Bek, of Eresby, Hugh and Anthony de.
Berry.
Besace.
Bodville.
Brack ey.
Brandes, Sir Bertram.
, ray.
Braybroke, Henry de.
Breton, John.
Bruce, Sir William de, slain at Acon.
Brucourt.
Calverly.
Camville, Richard de, slain at Acon.
Camville, Wm. de, drowned before Acon.
Carbonnel.
Carone, Baldwin de.
Chandler.
Cifrevast.
Clifford, Sir Robert de.
Clinchamp, Alain de.
Courcy.
Croxby.
Dancy, Guy de.
Dethick, of Dethick Hall, Staffordshire.
Elmham.

Fasington.
Fiennes, Ingelram de, ancestor of the Lords Say and Sele.
Fitz-Count Brien, or Brien de Wallingford.
———— Henry, Earl of Cornwall, son of Reginald, the natural son of Henry I.
Fitz-Hugh.
Fitz-Osbert.
Fitz-Ralph.
Fitz-Roberts, Earl of Leicester.
Fitz-Walter, Robert, Lord.
Freville.
Giffard, David.
Glamorgan.
Glanville, Roger de.
Golafre
Goldsmith.
Gournay, Girard de.
Hall.
Hamars, Peter de.
Hastings.
Hauterne.
Hautreve, Ralph de, Archdeacon of Colchester, slain at Acon.
Henry of Huntingdon.
Hilton.
Humes.
Kent.
Kyme, Walter de, died at Acon.
Lacy, Henry de, Earl of Lincoln.
Lamburne, John de.
Lestrange, Hamon.
Lexby, Richard de, died at Acon.
———, Beringer, his brother.
Lindsay, Richard de.
Lovel.
Lucy, Walter de.
Luttrell.
Mackarel, John de.
Malmains, Gilbert.
Mandeville, Geffrey de, Earl of Essex
Mauley.
Meautys.
Minnot, Peter, slain at Acon.
Minshull.
Moncey.
Monteney.
Montfort, Almaric de, Earl of Montfort and Leicester.
————, Hugh de.
Montgomery.
Mortimer.
Morwick.
Mowbray, John de.
Moy, Walter de.
Muschamp.
Nigell, of Kent.
Oilli, Walter and Richard de.
Oreby, Philip de.
Percy, Ralph, son to the first Earl of Northumberland.
Perdu.
Phillips.
Pinkney.
Pipard, Gilbert.
Pomeroy, Savage de.
Poole, William de.
Purcell, William de.
Pusac.
Ros, of Hamlake, William de.
——, Walker de.
Sackville, Robert de.
St. Alban's, Robert de, a Knight Templar, deserted to Saladin.
St. Ledger, John de.
St. Loo, Robert de.
Salisbury, Bishop of.
Savoy, Peter de, Earl of Richmond.
Scales, Henry de.
Scott, David, Earl of Huntingdon, brother to William, king of Scotland.
Semilly.
Silvester, Seneschal of the Archbishop of Canterbury.
Sinclair, Henry.
Stafford, Hugh de, Earl of Stafford.
Stuart.
Stuteville, Osmond de.
Suhard.
Talbot, Gerard.
Tancarville.
Tesson, Raoul and John.
Theodore, Prior of the Hospitallers.
Tibetot, Sir Robert de.
Tilly, Ralph de
Tilney, Frederick
Tour, de la.
Tryvet.
Turnham, Robert de.
Ulford, Robert de.
Valentine
Vaux, Ralph de.
Vennor, of Pomfret.
Verdun, Roland de.
Vere, Roger de, natural son of Aubrey de Vere, second Earl of Oxford.
——, Aubrey de, third Earl of Gisney, Great Chamberlain of England, recovered by his sword the Christian banner, captured at Antioch.
Villiers.
Vipount, Robert de.
Wale.
Walter, Hubert, Archbishop of Salisbury.
Waterville, Sir William.
Willoughby, William de.
———— ——, of Eresby.
Zouch, Alevn.
———, William.

THE ARGUMENTS.

CANTO I.

Introduction.—Invocation of the Heavenly Muse.—Address to Alphonso II., Duke of Ferrara, the poet's patron.—Summary of the conquests of the Christians during their six years' stay in Asia.—In the spring of the seventh year, the Supreme Being sends the Archangel Gabriel to Godfrey of Bouillon, ordering him to assemble the Chiefs of the Crusaders, and encourage them to march without further delay to Jerusalem, assuring him at the same time that he shall be elected their leader.—Speeches of Godfrey and of Peter the Hermit to the assembly.—Godfrey is elected chief of the expedition.—He reviews his troops.—Catalogue of the Christian forces.—They commence their march.—Submission of the Prince of Tripoli.—Consternation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the King Aladine.—His character, and cruelty to his Christian subjects; his preparations for resistance.

CANTO II.

Aladine seizes an image of the Virgin Mary, that was concealed in one of the Christian churches, and places it in the royal mosque, instigated thereto by Ismeno the sorcerer, who promises to render it, by means of his incantations, an effectual palladium to Jerusalem.—In the course of the night, the statue is taken away from the mosque.—The king, enraged at not being able to discover the author of the removal, resolves upon a general massacre of his Christian subjects.—Sophronia, a young Christian lady of great beauty and virtue, determines to sacrifice herself for her countrymen, and accuses herself to the king, as the perpetrator of the theft.—She is ordered to be burnt alive.—Olindo, her lover, contradicts the confession she had made, takes the charge upon himself, and desires to suffer in her stead.—They are both tied to the stake, but are released by the timely arrival and intercession of Clorinda.—The Christian army arrives at Emaus, where they are met by Alethes and Argantes, ambassadors from the King of Egypt.—Speech of Alethes.—Godfrey's reply.—Reciprocal defiance and declaration of war by Godfrey and Argantes.—Godfrey dismisses the ambassadors with presents.—Alethes returns to Egypt, and Argantes goes forward to Jerusalem to assist in the defence of the city.

CANTO III.

The Christian army comes in sight of Jerusalem.—Their emotions on the first view of the Holy City.—Alarm of the townsmen.—Clorinda sallies out to meet the enemy.—She encounters and defeats a party of foragers.—Godfrey orders Tancred to advance to their support.—In the meantime Herminia, daughter of the deceased King of Antioch, points out to Aladine, from the top of an high tower, the principal leaders of the Christian army.—Conflict, and subsequent interview, between Tancred and Clorinda.—The Pagans are driven back to the walls.—Argantes restores the battle.—Dudon advances at the head of his Adventurers, and again drives back the Pagans

to the walls, but is himself slain by Argantes—Godfrey calls off his troops.—He reconoitres the town, and encamps near the northern gate.—Funeral of Dudon.—Artificers are despatched to a neighbouring forest, to cut down wood for the construction of military machines.

CANTO IV.

Satan (or Pluto, as he is here called), indignant at the success of the Christians in Palestine, summons a council in the infernal regions, to consider the best means of opposing their further progress.—His speech.—He sends his angels on earth.—At their instigation, Idraot, Prince of Damascus, a magician, sends his niece, Armida, who is likewise an enchantress, to the camp of the Christians, to endeavour to seduce their chiefs.—Her arrival at the camp, and interview with Eustace.—He introduces her to Godfrey.—Her fictitious account of herself.—Godfrey refuses to grant her the assistance she requires; but at length, at the instance of his brother Eustace, and others of his younger knights, consents to permit ten of the Adventurers to accompany her.—Her stratagems to induce others to join her.

CANTO V.

Eustace, being in love with Armida, persuades Rinaldo, of whom he is jealous, to solicit the place of Captain of the Adventurers, vacant by the death of Dudon.—Gernando, brother of the King of Norway, is a candidate for the same situation, and being secretly instigated by one of the evil Dæmons, uses expressions to the disparagement of Rinaldo, who kills him in the face of the whole army.—Godfrey having expressed a determination to punish the murderer, Rinaldo, at the joint advice of Tancred and Guelpho, his kinsmen, quits the camp.—Armida solicits and obtains from Godfrey a reluctant permission to depart with the succour which he had pledged himself to grant her.—Her ten companions are chosen by lot.—Godfrey's parting advice to them.—They are secretly followed in the night by Eustace, and many others, whose lots were not drawn.—Godfrey receives intelligence that the Egyptian expedition has sailed, and that a convoy of provisions, on its road from the ships to the camp, has been intercepted by the Arabs.—Famine apprehended in the camp.—Godfrey's speech to the soldiers.

CANTO VI.

Argantes sends an herald to the Christian camp, to invite one of their knights to single combat in a plain between the city and the camp.—Tancred is named by Godfrey to accept the challenge.—He leaves the camp, accompanied by Otho and others, but in his way his attention is arrested by the sight of Clorinda, who had been ordered by the King to take post at a distance from the scene of action with a corps of a thousand men.—Otho seizes the opportunity of Tancred's absence of mind, and advances to meet Argantes.—He is defeated and taken prisoner.—Combat between Tancred and Argantes.—At the approach of night, they are parted by heralds sent from either army, but pledge themselves to meet again in six days.—History of Herminia, and of her love for Tancred.—Her anxiety during the battle.—In her eagerness to know the state of Tancred's

wounds, she puts on Clorinda's armour, leaves the town by night, and determines to find her way into the enemy's camp, sending a squire beforehand to Tancred to give him notice of the arrival of a lady, but without making known her name.—She is intercepted and pursued by a party of Christian soldiers.—Tancred, impatient at her non-arrival, quits the camp, and rides in pursuit of her.

CANTO VII.

Herminia, unable to govern her horse, is carried away to a shepherd's cottage on the banks of the Jordan, where she determines to take up her abode for a time, and employs herself in pastoral occupations.—Tancred, having lost himself in pursuit of Herminia, is conducted by a treacherous guide to a castle belonging to Armida, built in an island in the Dead Sea.—His combat with Rambaldo, one of the Christian knights who had followed Armida, and been persuaded by her to embrace Mahometanism.—He is entrapped into the castle, and confined in a solitary cell.—The time appointed for the renewal of his combat with Argantes being expired, the latter sends a fresh defiance to the camp.—Tancred being absent, no Christian knight dares accept the challenge.—Godfrey, indignant at their cowardice, determines himself to supply Tancred's place, but is prevented by Raymond, who insists on fighting the Pagan champion, in spite of his age, and severely reproaches the rest for their backwardness.—Numbers now offer themselves, and it is determined that a champion shall be chosen by lot.—The lot falls upon Raymond.—His prayer to the Almighty, who sends his guardian angel to his protection.—Combat between Raymond and Argantes.—Belzebub, seeing the Pagan in danger, assumes the shape of Clorinda, and encourages Horaddin, a celebrated archer, to aim an arrow at Raymond.—The latter is wounded.—Godfrey, seeing the compact violated, and alarmed for Raymond's life, immediately charges the Pagans, who are on the point of being defeated, when Belzebub raises a storm, which, driving in the face of the Christians, causes confusion among them.—Clorinda seizes the opportunity, returns to the charge, and the Christians are driven back to their intrenchments with great loss.

CANTO VIII.

A Danish warrior arrives at the Christian camp, and informs Godfrey of the death of Sweno, Prince of Denmark, who, with a body of two thousand auxiliaries, was surprised by the Arabs in the night on the confines of Palestine, and put to the sword with all his followers, the narrator alone escaping the general slaughter. He further adds, that he had received supernatural orders to deliver the sword of the deceased prince into the hands of Rinaldo, by whom it was decreed that his death should be revenged.—A foraging party brings advice that they had found the armour and dead body of Rinaldo.—The Fury, Alecto, appears in a dream to Argillan, formerly a leader of Italian banditti; tells him that Rinaldo's death had been accomplished by the machinations of Godfrey, and stimulates him to rebellion. He convenes the Italian troops, and delivers an inflammatory harangue.—The camp is in open mutiny.—Godfrey's address to

Heaven.—He quells the mutiny, and causes Argillan to be seized and thrown into prison.

CANTO IX.

History of Solyman, the Turkish Sultan.—He is instigated by Alecto, who assumes the disguise of an old servant, to fall on the Christian camp at midnight at the head of his Arabs.—His address to his soldiers.—He assaults the camp.—Latinus and his five sons slain by Solyman.—Godfrey hastens to oppose the assailants, and sends Guelpho to meet Argantes and Clorinda, who, on a preconcerted signal, had made a sally at the head of the besieged.—The Almighty sends down the Archangel Michael to drive back the Dæmons to Hell.—Clorinda distinguishes herself in the battle.—During the confusion, Argillan escapes from his prison, and hastens to the scene of action.—His exploits.—He kills Lesbino, a page of the Sultan.—Is himself slain by Solyman.—While the conflict is yet doubtful, a band of fifty knights, the same who had followed Armida, unexpectedly appear in the field, and decide it in favour of the Christians.—Aladine, who had left the city to survey the battle, calls off his troops.—They are pursued by the Christians to the town with great slaughter.—Distress of Solyman.

CANTO X.

Solyman resolves to join the Egyptian army, then advancing against the Christians.—On his way he is awakened from his sleep by the enchanter Ismeno, who exhorts him to return to Jerusalem, and assist in defending the city.—He conveys him thither in an enchanted chariot.—They enter the town by a subterraneous passage, and, surrounded with a cloud which renders them invisible, make their way to the council chamber of the king, who is debating in the midst of his nobles. Speeches of the king, of Argantes, and of Orcan, a noble of Palestine, who advises that submission should be made to Godfrey.—Indignation of Solyman, who requests Ismeno to render them visible.—The cloud instantly vanishes, and the Sultan bursts upon the astonished spectators.—His speech.—Godfrey receives from the knights who had been led away by Armida an account of their adventures, of their temporary transformation into fishes, and their liberation from captivity by Rinaldo, which disproves the reports of that hero's death.—Joy of Peter the Hermit, who is supernaturally inspired to foretel the future glories of Rinaldo and his posterity.

CANTO XI.

Godfrey, at the instigation of Peter the Hermit, previous to assaulting the town, conducts his army in procession to the Mount of Olives, where they hear mass, and receive the pastoral benediction from the prelates, William and Adhemar.—Preparations for the assault.—Godfrey, in consequence of a previous vow, assumes the dress, and determines to share the dangers, of a private foot-soldier.—The rest of the princes follow his example.—The town is assaulted, and a breach made in the walls.—Clorinda successively kills or wounds seven princes of the Christian army, and lastly, Godfrey himself, who is obliged to quit the field of battle, leaving Guelpho in charge

of the army.—He, in his turn, is also wounded.—Argantes, encouraged by this success, invites Solyman to sally out and destroy the enemy's military machines.—They are met, and finally driven back by Tancred.—An angel descends from Heaven to heal Godfrey's wounds.—He returns to the field, and reanimates the combat, but on the approach of night withdraws his army.

CANTO XII.

Clorinda, jealous of the glory which Solyman and Argantes had acquired by their sally on the preceding day, determines to issue from the town by night, and burn the large wooden tower of the enemy, the only one that had been saved.—The Eunuch Arsetes, her attendant, endeavours to dissuade her, and unfolds the secret of her history, with which she was before unacquainted.—Heedless of his remonstrances, she sallies out at midnight, accompanied by Argantes.—They set fire to the tower, and return to the town closely pursued by the Christians.—In the confusion, the gates are shut upon Clorinda.—Her single combat with Tancred.—She is slain by him, having first received the rites of baptism at his hands.—His despair at discovering what he had done.—He endeavours to destroy himself.—Is recalled to his senses by Peter the Hermit.—Distress of the besieged at learning the news of Clorinda's death.—Argantes makes a vow to be revenged on Tancred.

CANTO XIII.

Ismeno, desirous to prevent the Christians from renewing their military engines, places the forest which supplied them with timber, in charge of the dæmons.—The artificers who are sent to cut down wood, retire in great alarm as soon as they come in sight of the enchanted forest.—Alcasto, a Swiss, engages to break the charm, but is baffled, and returns in confusion.—Tancred undertakes the task, makes his way into the wood, and prepares to cut down a tree, but is prevailed upon to desist by a dæmon in the shape of Clorinda.—Godfrey's solicitude.—Peter the Hermit predicts that his difficulties and trials shall soon cease.—The Christians are afflicted with an unusual heat and drought.—The troops begin to desert the camp.—Godfrey's prayer to the Almighty, who, moved by his entreaties, takes compassion on the Christians, and decrees that their sufferings shall have an end, and their enterprise be shortly crowned with success.—He refreshes them with rain.

CANTO XIV.

Godfrey, in a vision, is transported to Heaven.—He there has an interview with Hugh, the deceased commander of the forces of the French King, who assures him of a prosperous issue to his undertaking, but instructs him to recall Rinaldo to the camp.—A petition being made to him by Guelpho to that effect on the following morning, Godfrey consents to his recall.—Charles, the Danish warrior, and Ubald, one of the Adventurers, are commissioned to go in quest of Rinaldo.—Having received instructions from Peter the Hermit, they take the road to Ascalon, and, arriving at the mouth of a river, discover an old man walking on the surface of the waters.—He conducts them to his habitation under the bed of the river, shows them

various wonders, and informs them of what had happened to Rinaldo since he quitted the camp, and of the manner in which he was ensnared by Armida, who fell in love with him, and conveyed him away to an enchanted palace on the Peak of Teneriffe.—He then instructs them how they are to reach the place of his retreat, and liberate him from his confinement.

CANTO XV.

The two knights embark in a vessel which is steered by a mysterious female.—They traverse the Mediterranean, pass the Straits of Gibraltar, enter the Atlantic Ocean, and reach the Fortunate Islands.—They land on the island of Teneriffe.—They ascend the mountain, which is guarded by wild beasts, and the sides of which are covered with snow.—Overcoming all obstacles of nature and art, they gain the summit, and find it clothed with the most beautiful verdure, and enjoying a perpetual spring.—They come to the Fountain of Laughter, and discover two nymphs bathing.—Various allurements are practised upon them, which they resist, and enter the Palace of Armida.

CANTO XVI.

Description of Armida's Palace and Garden.—The knights discover Rinaldo and Armida.—As soon as she retires, they make themselves known.—Rinaldo, seized with sudden shame and contrition, follows them instantly out of the palace.—Armida's consternation at his departure.—She has recourse to her incantations, but without effect.—She follows him to the sea-shore, and endeavours to prevail upon him to permit her to accompany him.—Her various emotions at finding her petition rejected.—She destroys the enchanted palace, and, mounting her car, flies through the air to her castle in the Dead Sea, whence she sets out to join the Egyptian army.

CANTO XVII.

Character of the Caliph of Egypt.—Description of his person.—He reviews his army on the plains of Gaza.—Catalogue of his forces.—Armida arrives during the review with a band of auxiliaries.—Description of her chariot, and of herself.—The caliph delegates the command of the army to Emireno, a Christian renegade.—Gives an entertainment to his vassal princes and captains.—Armida's speech to the caliph.—She promises her hand to any warrior that shall kill Rinaldo.—Adrastus, an Indian king, and Tissaphernes, a distinguished Egyptian soldier, pledge themselves to execute her wishes.—Their mutual jealousy and quarrel, which is appeased by the intercession of the caliph.—Rinaldo and the two knights land on the coast of Palestine.—They meet with the old magician by whom the two latter had been before entertained.—He gives Rinaldo a suit of costly armour.—On the shield are represented the exploits of Rinaldo's ancestors, the princes of the House of Este.—Rinaldo receives the sword of Sweno from the hand of Charles.—They proceed on their journey to the camp, and on the way the Hermit foretells to Rinaldo the glory of his descendants.

CANTO XVIII.

Rinaldo's interview with Godfrey, and with Peter the Hermit, who gives him instructions for overcoming the monsters of the Enchanted

Forest.—He goes to offer up his devotions on Mount Olivet, and proceeds to the wood.—Meets with prodigies of a different nature from what he had expected.—Is accosted by a dæmon in the shape of Armida.—He cuts down a tree, and the enchantment is immediately at an end.—He returns to the camp.—New and more formidable engines are now constructed, under the auspices of a Genoese engineer.—Preparations of the besieged for defence.—Ismeno makes artificial fire of an unusually destructive quality.—A carrier pigeon, being pursued by a hawk on its way to Jerusalem, flies for shelter into Godfrey's bosom.—He finds under her wing a letter from the Egyptian General to the King, promising to relieve the town from blockade if he can hold out four or five days longer.—Godfrey convenes his captains, imparts to them the intelligence, and gives orders for the assault.—He divides his army into three parts; one division is assigned to Raymond, the second he retains himself, and entrusts the third to Camillo.—By the advice of Raymond, Vafrino, Tancred's squire, is sent as a spy to reconnoitre the Egyptian camp.—On the day previous to the assault, the whole Christian army confesses, and receives the Sacrament.—The three divisions assault the town at the same time, in three different quarters.—Rinaldo first mounts the wall, and is followed by Eustace.—The moveable tower which was under Godfrey's immediate command, is set on fire, and is on the point of being reduced to ashes, when the wind rising suddenly, drives back the flames against the town.—Ismeno has recourse to incantations.—He is killed on the walls, with two sorceresses at his side.—The Archangel Michael appears to Godfrey, and shows him the spirits of the warriors who had fallen in the Holy War, and all the celestial hierarchy fighting on his side.—Godfrey, impatient of further delay, seizes an ensign from the standard-bearer, and is on the point of gaining a footing on the wall, when he is opposed by Solyman, who, however, retreats on the approach of Rinaldo.—Godfrey plants the Cross on the walls of Jerusalem.—Tancred, who was with Camillo's division, does the same in another quarter.—Raymond, who was opposed by Aladine in person, is less successful on the southern side; but when the king hears the shouts of victory, which convince him that the town is taken, he retires to a strong tower, which he still hopes to defend.—The town is entered on all sides, and a dreadful slaughter made by the Christians.

CANTO XIX.

Tancred and Argantes meet on the walls.—They retire to a distance from the town by mutual consent, and engage in single combat.—Argantes is slain.—Tancred faints from loss of blood.—Jerusalem sacked by the Christians.—Rinaldo's exploits.—The Pagan army, and a large portion of the populace, take refuge in the Temple of Solomon, the gates of which are forced by Rinaldo.—Fresh slaughter of the Pagans. Solyman and Aladine retire to the Tower of David.—Raymond, attempting to force an entrance, is stunned by a blow of the sultan's mace, but is rescued by his soldiers.—Godfrey calls off his troops at the approach of night, and keeps possession of the town, determining to storm the last retreat of the enemy at daybreak.—Vafrino's success in reconnoitring the Egyptian camp.—

He discovers Herminia in the train of Armida.—She escapes with him from the camp, explains the plot which the Egyptian commander meditated against Godfrey's life, and confides to him the secret of her passion for Tancred.—Approaching the town, they find the dead body of Argantes, and that of Tancred, to all appearance lifeless.—Herminia's lamentation and despair.—Tancred is recovered by her attentions.—A detachment of soldiers arrives, who convey Tancred and the dead body of Argantes to the city. Vafrino relates his discoveries to Godfrey, who determines, by the advice of Raymond, to blocade the citadel where Aladine had taken refuge, and to give the Egyptians battle on the following day.

CANTO XX.

The Egyptian army appears in sight.—Exultation of the Pagans, who were shut up in the Tower of David.—Impatience of the Christians for the attack.—Godfrey refuses to give battle till the following morning.—At break of day he leads out his army.—His order of battle, and address to his soldiers.—Emireno, the Egyptian leader, draws up his troops.—His various speeches to different portions of his army.—The fight commences.—Exploits of Gildippe, the Christian heroine, and of Altamore, the Persian king.—They encounter each other.—Ormondo and his confederates make an attempt on Godfrey's life, but are discovered, and cut to pieces, Ormondo himself being slain by Godfrey.—The extreme left of the Egyptians endeavours to surround the Christian army, but is checked and routed by Rinaldo at the head of the adventurers.—His exploits.—He passes by Armida.—Her conflicting emotions at the sight of him.—Despairing of success, and fearful of being made prisoner, she retires from her station in the battle, escorted by Altamore, during whose absence the left wing, which he commanded, is put to flight.—On the right, the Pagans discomfit the left wing of the Christians under the two Roberts, one of whom is severely wounded, the other taken prisoner.—Godfrey brings up his right wing against the right of the Pagans.—Solyman, who has a view of the battle from the fort, in which he was blockaded by Raymond and his Gascons, sallies out at the head of the besieged, accompanied by Aladine.—He makes a terrible slaughter.—Is encountered by Raymond, whom he again fells to the ground.—Tancred, roused by the confusion and the flight of the Gascons, quits his bed, and hastens, half-armed, to the protection of Raymond.—The latter revives, again joins the combat, and kills Aladine.—The sultan reaches the scene of action.—Death of Gildippe and Edward.—Adrastus and Solyman successively slain by Rinaldo.—Prowess of Tissaphernes.—He engages in single combat with Rinaldo, by whom he is slain.—Armida flies from the field of battle, and reaches a secluded place, where she is on the point of destroying herself, but is prevented by Rinaldo, who, seeing the enemy routed on every side, had followed her in her flight.—She is overcome by his persuasions, her fondness returns, and she gives herself up to his disposal.—Total route of the Egyptians.—Emireno, their commander, is slain, and Altamore made prisoner, by Godfrey, who, after the battle, repairs, with his whole army, to pay his adorations at the Holy Sepulchre.

Stanza xlvii.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

God to Tortosa sends his Angel down,
Whose mandate Godfrey reverently pursues;
A Council called—the knights of most renown
Him for their Chief unanimously choose;
He under their blest ensigns first reviews
The numbered troops, then to the plain that leads
To Salem guides them; troubled by the news,
His wrath Judea's aged tyrant feeds
With cruel schemes, from which he lingeringly recedes.

I.

I SING the pious arms and Chief, who freed
The Sepulchre of Christ from thrall profane:
Much did he toil in thought, and much in deed;
Much in the glorious enterprise sustain;
And hell in vain opposed him; and in vain
Afric and Asia to the rescue poured
Their mingled tribes;—Heaven recompensed his pain,
And from all fruitless sallies of the sword,
True to the Red-Cross flag his wandering friends restored.

II.

O thou, the Muse, that not with fading palms
Circlest thy brows on Pindus, but among
The Angels warbling their celestial psalms,
Hast for thy coronal a golden throng
Of everlasting stars! make thou my song
Lucid and pure; breathe thou the flame divine
Into my bosom; and forgive the wrong,
If with grave truth light fiction I combine,
And sometimes grace my page with other flowers than thine!

III.

The world, thou know'st, on tiptoe ever flies
Where warbling most Parnassus' fountain winds,
And that Truth, robed in song's benign disguise,
Has won the coyest, soothed the sternest minds:
So the fond mother her sick infant blinds,
Sprinkling the edges of the cup she gives
With sweets; delighted with the balm it finds
Round the smooth brim, the medicine it receives,
Drinks the delusive draught, and, thus deluded, lives.

IV.

And thou, Alphonso, who from fortune's shocks
And from her agitated sea, didst save,
And pilot into port from circling rocks
My wandering bark, nigh swallowed by the wave!
Accept with gracious smile—'t is all I crave—
These my vowed tablets, in thy temple hung,
For the fresh life which then thy goodness gave;
Some day, perchance, may my prophetic tongue
Venture of thee to sing what now must rest unsung.

V.

Well would it be, (if in harmonious peace
The Christian Powers should e'er again unite,
With steed and ship their ravished spoils to seize,
And for his theft the savage Turk requite,)
That they to thee should yield, in wisdom's right,
The rule by land, or if it have more charms,
Of the high seas; meanwhile, let it delight
To hear our verse ring with divine alarms;
Rival of Godfrey, hear, and hearing, grasp thine arms![1]

[1] The memory of the Crusades was still very lively at the period when Tasso wrote his "Gerusalemme," and as a new expedition was planned by Gregory XIII. the poet, perhaps, did not despair of himself gaining laurels in

VI.

Six summers now were past, since in the East
Their high Crusade the Christians had begun;
And Nice by storm, and Antioch had they seized
By secret guile, and gallantly when won,
Held in defiance of the myriads dun,
Prest to its conquest by the Persian king;
Tortosa sacked, when now the sullen sun
Entered Aquarius, to breme winter's wing
The quartered hosts give place, and wait the coming spring.

VII.

And now at length those storms were overblown
That had the trumpet hushed, and spring was nigh,
When, from his unimaginable throne,
Fixt in the Empyrean—the pure sky,
Above the highest of the stars more high
Than they from Lucifer's abysmal hall,
The' Eternal Father downward cast his eye,
And in an instant, at a glance, marked all
That passed, in light or shade, on earth's terraqueous ball.

VIII.

All things on earth he views; at length his eyes
Upon the Christian Powers in Syria rest,
And with that clear inspection which descries
The most concealed affections of the breast,
He notices how Godfrey burns to wrest
From hands profane the consecrated town,
And, heaven affecting, in what slight request
He holds the meaner joys of earth—renown,
Treasure, and purple power, and glory's meteor crown.

IX.

Baldwin he sees ambitiously aspire
The height of human grandeur to attain,
And Tancred, victim to a fruitless fire,
Life's choicest blessings gloomily disdain,
Whilst Bohemond in Antioch builds his reign,
And introducing arts and settling laws,
The poise of his new kingdom to sustain,
By power of solemn right and custom, draws
His Turks to' adore aright the one Supernal Cause:—

the Holy Land. The mutual jealousy of the Christian princes, however, rendered the Pontiff's attempts nugatory.

X.

And so absorbed herein, he seems to lose
All recollection of their first designs;
An ardent soul, impatient of repose,
The warrior's virtue, in Rinaldo shines,—
Which nor to lust of gold nor power inclines.
But to that quenchless thirst of fame which leads
To generous acts, and for distinction pines;
On Guelpho's lips he hangs intent, and feeds
On themes of antique worth, and high romantic deeds.

XI.

Of these and other hearts the inmost folds
And motions as the' Omniscient Mind surveys,
Of the angelic splendours him who holds
In the first glorious rank the second place,
Gabriel he calls, the herald of his grace
And faithful messenger, who oft repairs
On blessed errands to the human race,
And, sweetly solacing the virtuous, bears
Back to his mercy-seat the incense of their prayers.

XII.

To him the Almighty Sire: "To Godfrey go,
And ask what languor has his mind possessed,—
The war still unrenewed, unmoved the foe,
And Salem's grievous wrongs yet unredressed.
A council let him call; from slothful rest
Rouse the lethargic, and the cold excite;
Him with the sovereign rule I here invest,
As shall the chieftains upon earth,—each knight
His comrade now no more, but agent in the fight!"

XIII.

He said, and Gabriel plumed himself to go
Swift on the errand of his Lord; he rolled
The air around his viewless essence, so
That mortal eye the vision might behold;
The aspect human, human was the mould
Assumed, but mixed with majesty divine;
He wreathes the sunbeams in his locks of gold,
And moves a seraph, whose fair looks define
The age when youth just seems with boyhood to combine.

XIV.

White wings sustain him, edged with golden dyes,
Unwearied, swift, and pliant in their play;
With these he cuts the winds, and clouds, and skies,
And high o'er land and ocean sails away:
Down to Earth's loftier peaks, in this array,
His course the Messenger of Heaven consigned:
And first on sweet Mount Lebânon to stay,
He, hovering for an instant, seemed inclined,
And shook his sparkling plumes, self-balanced on the wind:

XV.

Then downward, where Tortosa's towers arise,
Urged his precipitate and circling flight;
The sun was rising in the eastern skies,
Part seen, part curtained by the waves from sight;
And Godfrey, mindful of the wonted rite,
His matin prayer was offering to the ear
Of the Most High, in lowliness contrite;
When, like the shining sun, but far more clear,
He from the Orient saw the winged Archangel steer:—

XVI.

"Godfrey," he said, "the suited time that calls
Beleagured hosts to arms, at length survey;
Why, whilst Oppression sits in Salem's halls,
And Fortune beckons, this supine delay?
Call now the Princes of your armed array
To solemn council, and if sloth dissuade,
Spur thou them on the city to assay;
Thee God elects to guide their blest crusade,
And, chosen of all, by all thy voice shall be obeyed:

XVII.

"His messenger I am, and thus reveal
To thee his sacred will; of victory rare
What hopes should hence be thine; and O, what zeal
For the brave hosts committed to thy care!"
He spoke; he ceased; and vanishing in air,
To the serenest and the loftiest part
Of heaven flew back: long dazzled by the glare
Of the bright vision, and amazed at heart,
Godfrey with upraised eyes remained, and lips apart.

XVIII.

But when, recovering spirit, he discerned
Who sent, who came, and what was the command,
If late he glowed, he now with ardour burned
To end the war committed to his hand:
Not that ambition's breath his bosom fanned
Into vain-glorious pride, from so entire
A preference o'er the rest, but as a brand
Or living coal in a refulgent fire,
In his lord's will more warm becomes his own desire.

XIX.

Then from their various posts his valiant friends,
Not far dispersed, to council he invites;
Message on message, scroll on scroll he sends,
And strong entreaty to advice unites;
Whatso might most from indolent delights
Rouse the reluctant, whatso most might reach,
And quicken generous natures, he indites;
Meets all men's moods, and with such charms of speech,
That whilst he all compels, he wins and pleases each.

XX.

All, except Bohemond, attend; in train
The busy people flock behind; part wait
Without, encamped upon the ample plain,
The rest Tortosa holds from gate to gate:
Baron and prince, and helmed potentate
The Cónsistory crown, a solemn throng,
When, with an air august, in ducal state
Godfrey arose; majestically strong
His graceful periods flow, and charm the soul along.

XXI.

"Warriors of God, by God himself elected,
Of his true Faith the breaches to restore!
Ye, whom his arm has guided, and protected
From storms by sea and ambuscades on shore!
So that in these few years that have flown o'er,
It has been ours strong monarchies to tame,
Realm after realm, rebellious now no more,
And through the shaken nations spread the fame
Of his triumphant Cross and consecrated name!—

XXII.

"We left not (do I err?) our native land,
Connubial pledges and domestic sweets,
Trusting our fortunes to a faithless strand,
Where battle rages and wild ocean beats,
But to acquire, with its barbaric seats,
A crowd's huzza; if upon this we built,
How poor the' ambition! sense with scorn repeats
The prize, and all the blood our swords have spilt,
Has to our deathless souls been sown in deepest guilt!

XXIII.

"But far more glorious were our aims,—we vowed
The noble walls of Sion to obtain,
And work redemption for the Faithful, bowed
Beneath subjection's ignominious chain;
Founding in Palestine a purer reign
Where Piety may rest, and Peace recline
In full security, and none restrain
The freeborn pilgrim, passing o'er the brine,
From offering holy vows at meek Messiah's shrine.

XXIV.

"Thus then till now we have risked much, toiled more,
Reaped little good, but for our main intent
None whatsoever, if we here give o'er,
Or turn to other marks the blow we bent:
What will it serve us from the Occident
To' have drawn this splendid force, and to have strown
These fires abroad o'er Asia, if the' event
Of our so mighty movement be alone—
Not glorious kingdoms raised, but ruined and o'erthrown!

XXV.

"He who would here raise empires, must not seek
On worldly policies the base to found,
Where of a fellow-faith his friends are weak
And few, amidst the countless Pagans round,
The land that people,—here, where he no ground
Can have on Grecian succour to presume,
And all too distant from his trumpet's sound
Lies the far West; he builds, but the Simoom
Sweeps round, and instant turns his palace to a tomb.

XXVI.

"Turks, Persians, Antioch, (an illustrious prize,
In fame and fact magnificent,) attest
Not our past skill, but the assisting skies;
Victory a wonder was: now, if we wrest
These purposed blessings to an end unblest,
Wronging the Giver who so far has crowned
The hopes we cherished,—Chiefs! I tremble, lest
We vanish to a fable and a sound,—
The brilliant byword passed through the wide nations round.

XXVII.

"May there be none amongst us, O my friends,
So to misuse such gifts! your interests see;
With these sublime commencements let the ends,
The filament and woof throughout agree.
Now that the passes of the land are free,
Now that the vernal season clears the plain,
Apt for the enterprise, why rush not we
The crown of all our conquests to attain?
What should prevent the deed? what here our arms detain?

XXVIII.

"Princes! I vow to you, (and what I vow,
Present and future times alike shall hear;
The very Angels, whilst I speak it, bow
On their bright thrones, and lend a listening ear,)
The period is arrived that we should rear
Our flag aloft; less fortunate will flow
The tide, the longer we delay; things clear
Will set in night, and if our course be slow,
Egypt—assured I speak—will aid the Syrian foe!"

XXIX.

He ceased: a hollow hum ensued,—but then,
The primal author of the high crusade,
Peter the Seer, who midst the noblest men
Sat private in the council, rose and said:
"What Godfrey stirs us to, I well have weighed,
And second; room for reasoning there is none;
He the true path self-evident has made,
And through the whole clear argument has run;
'Tis yours the plan to' approve —one word, and I have done.

XXX.

"When I the scorns and discords recollect,
As if on purpose by you borne and given,
Your froward judgments, and proceedings checked
Just at the moment when they might have thriven.
To a high source, O Princes, am I driven;
I trace the ills, in all their forms and kinds,
To your void powers! our government is even
As a vague pendulum, which each one finds
Struck by as many hands as there are various minds.

XXXI.

"Where one alone commands not, upon whom
The cast of parts and offices depend,
The dues of honour and decrees of doom,
There still the helm to some wrong point will tend;
Your separate rights, then, amicably blend
In some one prince, of influence to restrain
The rest,—to one alone dominion lend,
And leave him free, as wisdom will ordain,
A king's prescriptive power and semblance to sustain."

XXXII.

Here ceased the Sage: what thoughts, celestial Fire!
What hearts, blest Spirit! to thy sweet appeal
Are proof? the Hermit's words didst thou inspire,
And on all hearts imprint them with thy seal.
Ingrafted, e'en innate desires, thy zeal—
The love of honour, liberty and sway,
Checked in subservience to the public weal;
So that the noblest were the first to say,
"Our Chief let Godfrey be; him swear we to obey!"

XXXIII.

The rest consent: they marshal on his side,
The power to counsel and command; to give
The vanquished laws, and here or there to guide
The war, with uncontrolled prerogative;
Whilst they, but late his peers, are to receive
His issued mandates with submissive minds,
And aid in ministry executive:
This done, the rumour flies abroad, and finds
Speed in the tongues of men, and spreads on all the winds.

XXXIV.

He to the soldiers shows himself, and they
Are well content he should the truncheon bear;
The warlike greetings and huzzas they pay,
Calmly he takes and with a gracious air:
Then, having answered courteously and fair
To the frank vows of discipline that stamp
Their love and loyalty, he bids repair
Each to his banner, the collected Camp,
And pass review, when Day next lights its shining lamp.

XXXV.

Slow in calm glory from its orient bower
And with unwonted sheen, the Star of day
Rose on the morrow, when from tent and tower,
Issuing in polished arms and ranged array,
The squadrons rear their standards and display
Their force, wide wheeling round the vast champaign;
Sole in the centre, whence he might survey
Both horse and foot, the Chief observed the chain
Of the whole movement pass, in long revolving train.

XXXVI.

Sibyl divine, that in thy guardian cell
Treasurest all story! foe to Night and Time!
Aid me with all thine intellect, to tell
What troops and heroes come from every clime;
Their ancient deeds light up and sound sublime,
Now dark and silent grown with years; O bring
From thy rich stores to grace my naked rhyme,
Somewhat with which each listening age may ring,
And none have power to' efface—smile on me whilst I sing!

XXXVII.

First to the field the gallant Franks advance,
From where, wide sweeping, four bold rivers spread
Beauty and fruitage o'er the Isle of France,—
Flower of her force, and once by Hugo led,
Their good king's brother; but his vital thread
Cut short, the flag in whose field azure flame
The Golden Lilies, they beneath the dread
Clotharius follow, whom a kingly name
Marks, to perfect his worth and more enhance his fame.

XXXVIII.

A thousand these, completely fenced in mail,
Pace the green turf; a like choice troop succeeds,
In courage, discipline, and massive scale
Of armour like the first,—on generous steeds
Borne to the battle from their Norman meads,
Ten gallant hundreds; and the total ten
A native prince, the bold Duke Robert, leads,
From Rollo sprung: two pastor-chieftains then,
William and Ademar, bring up their marshalled men.

XXXIX.

These held of late authority divine,
The hallowed priests of piety and prayer,
Who fearless now in horrid conflict shine,
And press beneath the helm their long black hair:
That from the city and dominions fair
Of ancient Orange to the fierce alarms
Leads full five hundred: this beneath his care,
From whence high Puy the traveller's notice charms,
An equal number brings, not less renowned in arms.

XL.

Next in the muster Baldwin shows, conjoined
With his own Lorrainers, his brother's band,
Which Godfrey to his conduct late resigned,
When made a captain, captains to command;
Sagacious counsel and a powerful hand
The Count of Chartres grace, who with him leads
Four hundred knights, the bravest of the land;
And thrice that number, armed, on prancing steeds,
Baldwin himself conducts:—a noble name succeeds:

XLI.

One whose desert his fortune overweighs,
Though equal with the proudest, Guelpho came;
Who from his sire by sure deduction lays
To Esté's princely house ancestral claim,
But, German by inheritance and name,
Is in the Guelphic stem ingraft; his sway
Is o'er Carinthia, where barbaric fame
The Sueves and Rhetians reaped in ancient day,
Where the rough Danube cleaves, the mild Rhine wins its way.

XLII.

To that maternal heritage his blade
A great and glorious acquisition joins;
And thence a race he brings, who undismayed
Will march 'gainst Death to' achieve his bold designs;
A race, that when the wintry sun declines,
In warm abodes the sullen hours revive
With gay carousals and the flow of wines;
Five thousand left their homes,—a third survive
Sole from the Persian spear, in battle still to strive.

XLIII.

Next comes the fair-haired race whose lands incline
Betwixt the Frank and German to the main,
Bathed by the swelling Meuse and fruitful Rhine,—
A pastoral people, rich in herds and grain;
The' industrious Islanders augment their train,
Whose rampired banks, though fenced with all the powers
Of Art, the' insulting Ocean scarce sustain,—
The wild voracious Ocean, which devours
Not fleets alone, but realms with all their towns and towers.

XLIV.

Two thousand these the hopes of honour bring
Beneath a second Robert; somewhat more,
William, the young son of the English king,
Conducts in arms from Britain's chalky shore;
Long bows the English at their shoulders bore,
With those whom Ireland, nearer to the pole,
Sends from wild woods resounding to the roar
Of wintry winds,—the limit of the whole
Well-peopled earth, round which its last drear oceans roll.

XLV.

Then Tancred follows to the war, than whom
Save young Rinaldo, is no nobler knight,
More mild in manners, fair in manly bloom,
Or more sublimely daring in the fight!
If any shade of error makes less bright
His rich endowments and heroic charms,
It is the foil of Love, which at first sight
Born of surprise, amid the shock of arms,
Grows with increase of tears and sorrow's fond alarms.

XLVI.

In noon of that auspicious day which wrought
The Persian's overthrow, faint with the chase
Of fugitives, 't is rumoured, that he sought
For his o'erwearied limbs and glowing face,
Repose and cool refreshment; with slow pace
He reached at length, with green seats compassed round,
And summer woods, which shaded all the place,
A living spring, that with melodious sound
Flowed from a hollow rock, in many a fall profound.

XLVII.

To the same warbling of fresh waters drew,
Armed, but unhelmed and unforeseen, a maid;
She was a Pagan, and came thither too,
To quench her thirst beneath the pleasant shade;
Her beautiful fair aspect, thus displayed,
He sees; admires; and, touched to transport, glows
With passion rushing to its fountain head,
The heart; 't is strange how quick the feeling grows;
Scarce born, its power in him no cool, calm medium knows!

XLVIII.

She reassumed her helm, and threatening stood
To strike the chief, but others drawing nigh,
Within the mazes of the leafy wood,
Compelled by numbers not by fear to fly,
The haughty Lady rushed; but still her high
And warlike image with a faith so true
He fosters in his heart, it ne'er can die;
The act, the scene where first she charmed his view,
For ever haunt his thoughts, and fan the fire anew.

XLIX.

And in his aspect legibly is traced
The hopeless flame that frets his life away;
He comes with sighings, and his eyes, abased,
A melancholy languishment betray:
Eight hundred horse have left beneath his sway
Campania's paradise, a pomp of scene
The noblest sure that Nature in her play
Of power e'er shaped—plains, woods, and hills between,
Wooed by the Tyrrhene sea, mild, fertile, smooth, and green.

L.

Two hun.. ed follow, from Greek heroes sprung,
Who nearly void of all defence are found;
Sole at their side short crooked swords are hung,
And bows and quivers at their backs resound;
Lean coursers have they, in the race renowned,
Proof to fatigue, of diet spare and slight;
Mounted on these, they seem to wing the ground;
Nimble alike in onset and in flight,—
Wide and dispersed they act, and e'en whilst flying, fight.

LI.

Tatine commands the troop, the only Greek
Who joined the Latin arms; O Greece, let shame
For ever sit upon thy passive cheek!
The wars are near thee now, yet, meanly tame,
Thou sitt'st a calm spectator of the game,
Thy shield scarce lifted, and thy sword in rust;
If now (complain not) destitute of fame,
Thou art a vassal humbled to the dust,
Thy doom no outrage is, but retribution just.

LII.

Lo now, the last in order of command,
But first for honour, skill, and glorious scars,
The Adventurers come, a brave, unconquered band,
The dread of Asia, thunderbolts of Mars!
Cease, Argo, thy renowned Adventurers,
Thy errant Peers, prince Arthur, cease to cite,
Filling our books with fable! fame instars
All antique story with a beam less bright
Than theirs;—now what fit chief may lead them to the fight?

LIII.

Dudon of Consa! for, as hard it was
Their birth and bravery to decide between,
All had agreed to rank beneath his laws,
As one who most had both achieved and seen.
In the last stage of mellowing manhood, keen
Shines his grey eye, and with his silver hairs
He shows a strength still juvenile and green;
Whilst, as in noble proof of what he dares,
He many a seam and scar in front imprinted bears.

[2] The "Ruggier di Balnavilla," of Tasso has been identified on unquestionable grounds with the ancestor of the Russell family in England. Roger, one of the sons of Hugh de Rosel, who came over with the Conqueror, was

LIV.

There Eustace ranks, whom much his brother's worth,
Much native merit for applause marks down;
There vaunts Gernando his illustrious birth,
His titles, stars, and hoped Norwegian crown.
Roger, of Barneville surnamed, Renown
And ancient Story with the noblest class;[2]
Gentorio, Engerlan, Rambaldo, own
As fair a fame; distinguished from the mass,
Brave among many brave the two young Gerards pass.

LV.

Nor Ubald, nor Rosmondo, the rich heir
Of English Lancaster, nor must the pride
Of Tuscan bravery, Obitzo, e'er
Sink unredeemed to Lethe's greedy tide;
Nor to the Lombard brothers, side by side,
Achilles, Sforza, Palamed the mild,
Nor to strong Otho be the verse denied,—
Otho, who conquered from the Paynim vilde
That shield whereon the snake devours a naked child.[3]

LVI.

Nor yet shall Guasco nor Ridolpho grieve,
Nor the two Guidos, whom the famed admire,
Nor Everard, nor Gernier will I leave
In mute inglorious silence to expire;
My hand falls weary on the numbering wire;
Where force ye me, as though your love I slighted,
Edward and sweet Gildippe? all my lyre
Is yours,—oh twins, in battle firmly plighted,
You, e'en when dead, in song shall not be disunited!

LVII.

What learn we not within the school of love?
There she became a heroine of a bride;
Nor toil, nor deepest danger can remove
The fair fond lady from her husband's side;
To the same fortune are their lives allied;
The blow falls not that hurts but one,—their pains
Are mutual as their joys; for if the tide
Of her dear blood bedews the hostile plains,
What she in person bears, in spirit he sustains.

lord of the two fiefs of Barneville and Rozel, on the western coast of Lower Normandy, and he is celebrated by all those writers on the First Crusade whose histories are published in the "Gesta Dei per Francos," and whom

LVIII.

But these, and all, the boy Rinaldo far,
Oh far excels! supremacy is thrown
Upon his forehead like a shining star,
And every eye is fixt on him alone;
Hope, and his years he far outstrips; scarce blown
Appear his blossoms, than the fruit's revealed;
So sweetly fierce, that when his face is shown
You deem him Love, but Mars, when helmed and steel'd,
He mounts his fiery barb, and fulmines through the field.

LIX.

Him fair Sophïa to Bertoldo bore,
Where the clear Adige's swift waters wind,
The lovely to the potent; and before
He well was weaned, the infant she consigned
To queen Matilda, who, sincerely kind,
Fostered, and taught him, as in years he grew,
All princely arts; her care his docile mind
Requited well, and thus his calm hours flew,
Till in the radiant East the martial trumpet blew.

LX.

Then, ere his youth could three short lustres boast,
Alone he fled by unknown tracks,—he passed
The' Egæan billows, the Ionian coast,
And reached in climes remote the camp at last;
A flight well fit some young enthusiast
In after days should follow, who would win
The like renown;[3] three years their fruits had cast,
Since with the warring armies he had been,
Yet still the tender down scarce feathered o'er his chin.

LXI.

The horsemen now have passed, and Godfrey views
The foot advance with Raymond at their head,
Duke of Narbonne, who ruled in fair Toulouse,
And his well-disciplined four thousand led,
Between the Ocean and Garonne bred,
And misty Pyrenees; a people free,
Firm in fatigue, incapable of dread,
At all points armed; and led they could not be
By one of greater skill or hardihood than he.

Tasso diligently consulted. See a full account of him in Wiffen's "House of Russell," vol. i, p. 40, &c.

3 Otho was the first of the family of the Visconti, afterward Dukes of

LXII.

But Stephen of Amboise leads from Blois and Tours
Troops full five thousand registered aright,
A nerveless race unable to endure
Fatigue, though wholly sheathed in armour bright;
The land luxurious, delicate, and light,
With a rich soil and a delicious air,
Produces like inhabitants; in fight,
The first assaults impetuously they dare,
But quickly tire with strife, and languish through the war.

LXIII.

Third comes Alcasto, cradled on the crag,
Threatening and stern as Capaneus of old
Before the Theban town; beneath his flag,
From each Helvetian tower and Alpine hold,
Six thousand fierce plebeians are enrolled;
Sharpening the ploughshare to the sword they rise;
And he who turned the furrow, watched the fold,
Now fearlessly the war's grim ridges eyes,
And with the mightiest matched, the strength of kings defies.

LXIV.

The lofty banner next is seen dispread
Which bears St. Peter's keys and mitred crown;
Seven thousand foot, by good Camillus led,
In massive armour sheathed, beneath it frown:
Glad that heaven calls him to the sacred town
In so divine a cause, he marches on,
There to renew his sires' antique renown,
Or prove at least, that if in aught outshone
By Latin worth, 't will be in discipline alone.

LXV.

But now the whole gay pageant had passed by
In regular review; when Godfrey sent,
And to the noblest chiefs, assembled nigh,
In brief discourse imparted his intent:
"My pleasure is, when next the firmament
Yields its first light, that you the hosts array,
And ere the foe anticipates the' event,
Or vanward scouts our quick descent betray,
March to the hallowed town, as swiftly as we may.

Milan, who have continued the armorial bearing assumed by their ancestor, from his conquest of a Saracen warrior in single combat, viz., *argent*, a

LXVI.

"Thus, then, prepare you for the march required,
And for the strife, and for the victory near!"
This daring speech from one so wise inspired
In each fresh courage, confidence, and cheer.
All ready stand for the sublime career,
And, unindulgent of the night's repose,
Wait with impatience till the morn appear;
In Godfrey's breast, albeit, from foresight rose
Fears which his cautious mind to no one would disclose.

LXVII.

For he by certain tidings understood
That Egypt's king was now upon his way
To Gaza's towers, a fortress strong and good,
Which seaward on the Syrian frontiers lay;
Nor could he think a prince so swift to prey
On whatsoe'er his enterprising mind
Was fixed to win, would trifle time away;
In him expecting a sharp foe to find,
He to his envoy's zeal this secret charge consigned.

LXVIII.

"In a light brigandine, compact and fleet,
Go thou to Greece; where the Propontic sea
Washes the seven-hilled City, thou wilt meet,
(As I have word from one who ne'er to me
Errs in advice,) of regal dignity,
A dauntless youth whose fixed intentions are
Forthwith to bear us martial company;
Prince of the Danes, he marches to the war
A numerous host from realms beneath the Arctic star.

LXIX.

"But since perchance the faithless Byzantine
Will practise on him each accustomed art
To turn him back, or on some new design,
Alien from ours, persuade the youth to start,—
Counsel him earnestly, my friend, apart,
To shun the' advice of that insidious king;
Both for his good and ours dispose his heart
With all convenient speed his aids to bring;
Say, that all stay were now an ignominious thing.

serpent wreathed in pale, *azure*, crowned *or*, devouring an infant *gules* or *proper*.

[4] A compliment to Alphonso, who, a youth under twenty, went out one

LXX.

"Come not thyself with him; but in the train
And at the Court of the Greek prince abide,
Those ofttimes-talked-of succours to obtain,
By treaty promised, due, but still denied."
To speak, instruct, and to his care confide
Letters of credence and of greeting fair,
Short time sufficed; the herald then applied
His busiest thoughts to expedite the' affair,
And Godfrey sought his tent, and gave a truce to care.

LXXI.

When now the Orient opened to the Sun
Its shining gates, the mingled voice profound
Of trumpet, tambour, horn, and cymbalon,
Cheered to the march the stirring troops around;
Not half so grateful is the thunder's sound
In the hot dog-days to the world forlorn,
Presaging freshness to the thirsty ground,
As to these warlike tribes the music drawn
From marshal tubes that treat of battles to be born.

LXXII.

Straightway, spurred on by strong desire, they drest
Their limbs in wonted armour; straight, in sheen
Of perfect panoply, the soldiers prest
Beneath their several regencies convene;
Ranged, the hosts join; and to the winds serene
Straight the borne banners all at once are given;
And in the' imperial gonfalon is seen
The Cross, triumphantly outspread, and driven
Abroad in waving folds voluminous to heaven.

LXXIII.

Meanwhile the Sun in the celestial fields
Perpetually advancing, rose in height,
And struck from pointed helms and bossy shields,
Clear, trembling lustres that torment the sight;
The broad air burns with glory, like a bright
And boundless conflagration; neighings shrill,
From fierce steeds ramping in their wild delight,
Mix with the sound of smitten steel, and fill
The deafened country round, hill answering loud to hill.

day on the pretence of hunting, passed into the Venetian territories, and thence fled into France, accompanied by five gentlemen. His design, he said, was to see the world, and be present at the wars in that country. Henry II., his-

LXXIV.

The prudent Chief to guard from ambuscade
His marching army, sent a troop before,
Of light-armed horse, with orders to invade
The hollow woods, and each strange place explore;
And first the pioneers advancing, bore
Their instruments, whereby the rugged way
Gives easy access; rivers are bridged o'er,
Dells filled, mounts levelled; shaggy woods display
Their tracks, and each close pass admits the lively day.

LXXV.

There are no moated towers, no massy woods,
No levies gathered by their Pagan foes,
Nor bursting streams, nor Alpine solitudes,
To countervail their course, or interpose
Cause of delay: thus in his grandeur flows
The King of Floods, when proudly he disdains
His limitary shores,—the torrent grows,
Swells o'er its ruined banks, and to the plains
Roaring sweeps down, nor aught its headlong wrath restrains.

LXXVI.

The king of Tripoli alone might hope
In his munitioned fortress, with success,
Powerful in forces, arms, and coin, to cope
With the Frank army, or their march distress;
But fearful to oppose them or repress,
Their jealous doubts he studies to appease
With entertainments and with gifts, nor less
To Godfrey's keep submits the kingdom's keys,
And from his hands accepts the articles of peace.

LXXVII.

There from Mount Seir, which rises on the east
Of the nigh city, crowds on crowds descend
Of the true Faith,—prince, worshipper, and priest;
Virgins, and youths, and matron-age attend;
Beneath refreshments for the host they bend,
Inly rejoiced; and using, side by side,
Familiar talk, their wonder knows no end,
The pilgrims' arms admiring;—they with pride
Furnish, at Godfrey's wish, a sure and friendly guide.

cousin-german, made him captain of a hundred men-at-arms, and he was engaged in several conflicts with the Spaniards. His flight took place in May, 1552, and he returned to Ferrara at the end of September, 1554.

LXXVIII.

Even in sight of the blue sea his host
By unobstructed ways direct he leads,
Well knowing that along the' adjacent coast
The friendly navy in its course proceeds;
Whence whatsoe'er so large an army needs
May be supplied, since each Greek island reaps
Corn but for him, since but for him Crete feeds
The thousand flocks that range her tangled steeps,
And Scio's rocky isle her wine celestial weeps.

LXXIX.

The bordering ocean groans beneath the prores
Of the swift vessels and their wealthy freight,
So that no longer the Levantine shores
To the false Turk give access as of late;
Beside the argosies of noblest rate
Armed by Saint Mark and by Saint George, which there
Cruise from rich Venice and the Genoese state,
Others from fruitful Sicily repair,
And England, Belgium, France, alike equip their share.

LXXX.

And these, which now in firmest bonds combined
With the sublime crusade confederate stand,
From various shores are fraught with every kind
Of stores that Godfrey may at need demand;
Who, finding free the passes of the land,
And that the frontiers of the realm present
No force, his onward progress to withstand
Or question, thither makes his swift descent,
Where Christ the pangs of death and darkness underwent.

LXXXI.

Yet not so swift, but that light Fame, the post
Of falsehood as of truth, flies far before,
And paints the fortunate, triumphant host,
United, moving, indolent no more;
What and how strong the squadrons, o'er and o'er
Recounts, with all whose deeds of valour grace
The herald's scrolls, from each romantic shore;
Narrates their vaunts, and with determined face,
The high usurping powers from Salem threats to chase.

LXXXII.

And looked-for evil is a greater ill
Than the winged mischief when it comes; each ear
Hangs on each whisper in suspense, and still
The face shews sadness, and the eye its tear.
A melancholy hum, confused and drear,
On wing within, on wing without the gates,
The fields and doleful city fills with fear;
But the old king in these momentous straits,
Close in his dubious heart ferocious schemes debates.

LXXXIII.

This prince, named Aladine, by recent crime
Raised to the throne, perpetual cares pursued;
He had been cruel once, but mellowing time
His native fierceness somewhat had subdued.
He having now but too well understood
That the Franks seek in battle to enclose
The town, much muses in his restless mood!
On former terror new suspicion grows;
Much he his subjects fears, and much he fears his foes.

LXXXIV.

For in his city a mixed people lived,
Of adverse Faiths: the weaker few retained
The laws of Christ—in Mahomet believed
The stronger many, and his rule maintained;
But when the king the crown of Sion gained,
And sought to stablish there his Court in state,
He on his loving Mussulmans ordained
Taxes and levies of a lighter rate,
But on the hapless Franks imposed a tenfold weight.

LXXXV.

This thought now fretting into gall, awoke
Within him all that cruelty which Time
Had lulled asleep, and giantlike he broke
From slumber, thirsting but the more for crime.
So the snake slumbers out the winter rime;
So fiercely wakes when summer warms the plain;
So the tamed lion from his burning clime
Torn, if provoked, assumes his fire again,
Rolls the red eye in rage, and shakes the bristling mane.

LXXXVI.

"I see," said he, "in this perfidious brood
Undoubted signs of new-conceived delight;
The public evil is their private good,
Our common sorrows but their smiles excite:
And now, e'en now perchance, in fraudful spite,
Each busy traitor with himself debates
How he may kill me, or at least by night
To my stern foe and his consorted mates,
May with most sure address unbar the guarded gates.

LXXXVII.

"But no! the fangs of the assaulted snake
Have one preventative—I'll wreak my will;
Destroy them all; a sharp example make;
Safe in the mothers' arms the infants kill,
Their temples fire, and to the lowest sill
Burn their abodes; these sacrificial cares
I owe to those whose blood the' invaders spill;
And first on yon scorned Sepulchre of theirs,
Shall the cowled priests be slain, 'midst all their vows and prayers."

LXXXVIII.

Thus he soliloquised; his acting hand
With his dire scheme, 't is true, but ill concurs;
But if he issues not the fierce command,
Baseness it is, not pity, that deters;
For whilst one fear to barbarous fury spurs
His earnest will, a stronger still in shew
Keeps it in check, and moves his just demurs;
He dreads the means of treaty to forego,
Or raise too high the rage of the victorious foe.

LXXXIX.

Yet though thus tempered was his wolfish wrath,
Elsewhere he gives his violence the rein;
The rustic's home he levels, and with scath
Of fire lays waste the cultivated plain;
He leaves no valley green with rising grain,
Where the Frank host may pleasantly repose,
Or reap subsistence; then with busy brain
In every fountain noxious drugs he throws,
And the polluted stream with secret poison flows;—

XC.

Crafty in cruelty! meantime no means
To reinforce the city he neglects,
Strong on three sides; but northward intervenes
A rampart less secure—he there erects
Walls on the first alarm, and its defects
Repairs with battlements that brave the skies,
And scorn subjection; lastly, he collects
His subject troops and subsidized allies,
And from his lofty towers the coming storm defies.

CANTO II.

STANZA XXV.

ARGUMENT.

NEW charms Ismeno tries, which proving vain,
The King a slaughter of the Franks decrees;
Bashful Sophronia and Olindo fain
Would die, his fatal anger to appease;
Clorinda, hearing their sad story, frees
From ruffian hands the' incomparable pair;
Argantes and Alethes treat of peace;
Which Godfrey not accepting, they forbear
No longer, mortal war against him to declare.

I.

Whilst the vext Tyrant thus prepared to arm,
Alone to him one day Ismeno drew;
Ismeno, who from the closed tomb can charm
The dead, and make them feel and breathe anew;
Ismene, who oft as tales devoutly true
Affirm, by whispered rhyme and murmured spell
Unbinds the demons of the deep to do
Deeds without name, or chains them in his cell,
And makes e'en Pluto pale upon the throne of hell.

II.

A Christian once, he now adores Mahound,
Yet former rites not wholly can forego,
But oft to foulest use will he confound
The laws of both, though well he neither know;
And now from caves where fern and nightshade grow,
Far from the vulgar, where in glooms immersed,
He his black arts is wont to practise, slow
Glides he to front the storm about to burst,—
To an accursed king a counsellor more accurst.

III.

"Oh king! the dreaded armies come," he cries,
"Unlingering, conquering; yet be not dismayed;
Let us but worthy of ourselves arise,
Both heaven and earth will give the valiant aid;
Well as the sceptre canst thou wield the blade,
And quick to furnish, skilful to foresee,
The duties of a king hast thou displayed
To admiration; if all act like thee,
For thy advancing foes this land a tomb shall be.

IV.

"For me, I come my succour to impart,
Thy friend alike in peril and in pain;
The utmost efforts of my magic art,
And the deep counsels of my aged brain,
Are at thy service; yea, I will constrain
The Angel hosts from blessedness that fell,
Part of the' impending labour to sustain;
But where I purpose to commence the spell,
And by what simple means, give audience while I tell.

V.

"Low in the Christian temple, under earth,
Stands in a secret grotto the rich shrine
Of her who gave their buried God to birth,
The Virgin Mother and the Saint divine;
Before the veil that screens her Image shine
Undying lamps, that to the mummery lend
Bright pomp; and round, with many a senseless sign,
The sapient devotees their gifts suspend,
There in long vigils kneel, in dumb devotions bend.

VI.

"Now this their image I would have conveyed,
With thine own hand from their invaded fane,
To the chief Mosque, and on it shall be laid
Spells of such power, that long as we retain
The new Palladium in our keep, a train
Of mighty spirits shall protect thy states;
Whilst steel attacks and fire assaults in vain,
Unrent the wall, impregnable the gates,
We shall the war roll back, and disappoint the fates!"

VII.

He said: the king approved; and in all haste
Sped to the Christian sanctuary, and tore
Down from its shrine the Image of the Chaste,
And with irreverence to the temple bore,
Where oft his impious Mussulmans adore,
High Heaven incensing; there in dreadful style
His spells the black Magician mumbles o'er
The holy image in th' unholy pile,—
Hymns which insult the skies, and praises which revile.

VIII.

But when in heaven the morning light appeared,
The startled guardian of the mosque profane
Saw not the image where it had been reared
The previous night, and sought for it in vain
Through every part of the extensive fane;
Straight to the king the tidings he conveyed,
Who fancying now in his mistrustful brain
That the illustrious prize had been betrayed
Back to some Christian Priest, unbounded rage displayed.

IX.

Whether it were that Christian hands by guile
Did bear off secretly the ravished prize,
Or that Heaven, angry that a place so vile
Should shroud her form who walks the glorious skies,
Put forth its power from these indignities
Its Goddess-queen to save, is vainly sought
In erring fame; but piety supplies
The heavenly lustre that irradiates thought,
Nor doubts that Heaven itself the glorious wonder wrought.

X.

In every temple, hermitage, and hall,
A long and eager search the monarch made,
And tortures or rewards decreed to all
Who screened the guilty, or the guilt betrayed;
Nor ceased the Sorcerer to employ in aid
Of the inquiry all his arts, but still
Without success; for whether Heaven conveyed
The prize away, or power of human will,
Heaven close the secret kept, and shamed his vaunted skill.

XI.

But when the king found all expedients vain
To trace the' offender, then, beyond disguise,
Flamed forth his hatred to the Christians; then,
Fed by wild jealousies and sharp surmise,
Immoderate fury sparkled in his eyes;
Follow what may, he will revenge the deed,
And wreak his rage: "Our wrath shall not," he cries,
"Fall void, but root up all the' accursed seed;
Thus in the general doom the guilty yet shall bleed!

XII.

"So that he 'scapes not, let the guiltless die!
But wherefore thus of guiltlessness debate?
Each guilty is, nor 'mongst them all know I
One, well-affected to the faith and state;
And what if some be unparticipate
In this new crime, new punishment shall pay
For old misdeeds; why longer do ye wait,
My faithful Mussulmans? up! up! away!
Hence with the torch and sword: seize, fire, lay waste, and slay!"

XIII.

Thus to the crowd he spake, the mandate flew,
And in the bosoms of the Faithful shed
Astonishment and stupor; stupor threw
On every face the paleness of the dead;
None dared, none sought to make defence, none fled,
None used entreaty, none excuse; but there
They stood, like marble monuments of dread,
Irresolute,—but Heaven conceived their prayer,
And whence they least had hope, brought hope to their despair.

XIV.

Of generous thoughts and principles sublime,
Amongst them in the city lived a maid,
The flower of virgins, in her ripest prime,
Supremely beautiful! but that she made
Never her care, or beauty only weighed
In worth with virtue; and her worth acquired
A deeper charm from blooming in the shade;
Lovers she shunned, nor loved to be admired,
But from their praises turned, and lived a life retired.

XV.

Yet could not this coy secresy prevent
The' admiring gaze and warm desires of one
Tutored by Love, nor yet would Love consent
To hide such lustrous beauty from the sun;
Love! that through every change delight'st to run,
The Proteus of the heart! who now dost blind,
Now roll the Argus eyes that nought can shun!
Thou through a thousand guards unseen dost wind,
And to the chastest maids familiar access find.

XVI.

Sophronia hers, Olindo was his name;
Born in one town, by one pure faith illumed;
Modest—as she was beautiful, his flame
Feared much, hoped little, and in nought presumed;
He could not, or he durst not speak, but doomed
To voiceless thought his passion; him she slighted,
Saw not, or would not see; thus he consumed
Beneath the vivid fire her beauty lighted;
Either not seen, ill known, or, known, but ill requited.

XVII.

And thus it was, when like an omen drear
That summoned all her kindred to the grave,
The cruel mandate reached Sophronia's ear,
Who, brave as bashful, yet discreet as brave,
Mused how her people she from death might save;
Courage inspired, but virginal alarm
Repressed the thought, till maiden shyness gave
Place to resolve, or joined to share the harm;
Boldness awoke her shame, shame made her boldness charm.

XVIII.

Alone amidst the crowd the maid proceeds,
Nor seeks to hide her beauty, nor display;
Downcast her eyes, close veiled in simple weeds,
With coy and graceful steps she wins her way:
So negligently neat, one scarce can say
If she her charms disdains, or would improve,—
If chance or taste disposes her array;
Neglects like hers, if artifices, prove
Arts of the friendly Heavens, of Nature, and of Love.

XIX.

All, as she passed unheeding all, admire
The noble maid; before the king she stood;
Not for his angry frown did she retire,
But his indignant aspect coolly viewed:
"To give,"—she said, "but calm thy wrathful mood,
And check the tide of slaughter in its spring,—
To give account of that thou hast pursued
So long in vain, seek I thy face, O king!
The urged offence I own, the doomed offender bring!"

XX.

The modest warmth, the unexpected light
Of high and holy beauty, for a space
O'erpowered him,—conquered of his fell despite,
He stood, and of all fierceness lost the trace.
Were his a spirit, or were hers a face
Of less severity, the sweet surprise
Had melted him to love; but stubborn grace
Subdues not stubborn pride; Love's potent ties
Are flattering fond regards, kind looks, and smiling eyes.

XXI.

If 't were not Love that touched his flinty soul,
Desire it was, 't was wonder, 't was delight:
"Safe be thy race!" he said, "reveal the whole,
And not a sword shall on thy people light."
Then she: "The guilty is before thy sight,—
The pious robbery was my deed; these hands
Bore the blest Image from its cell by night;
The criminal thou seek'st before thee stands,—
Justice from none but me her penalty demands."

XXII.

Thus she prepares a public death to meet,
A people's ransom at a tyrant's shrine:
Oh glorious falsehood! beautiful deceit!
Can Truth's own light thy loveliness outshine?
To her bold speech misdoubting Aladine
With unaccustomed temper calm replied:
"If so it were, who planned the rash design,
Advised thee to it, or became thy guide?
Say, with thyself who else his ill-timed zeal allied?"

XXIII.

"Of this my glory not the slightest part
Would I," said she, "with one confederate share;
I needed no adviser; my full heart
Alone sufficed to counsel, guide, and dare."
"If so," he cried, "then none but thou must bear
The weight of my resentment, and atone
For the misdeed." "Since it has been my care,"
She said, "the glory to enjoy alone,
'T is just none share the pain; it should be all mine own."

XXIV.

To this the tyrant, now incensed, returned,
"Where rests the Image?" and his face became
Dark with resentment: she replied, "I burned
The holy image in the holy flame,
And deemed it glory; thus at least no shame
Can e'er again profane it—it is free
From farther violation; dost thou claim
The spoil or spoiler? this behold in me;
But that, whilst time rolls round, thou never more shalt see.

XXV.

"Albeit no spoiler I; it was no wrong
To repossess what was by force obtained:"
At this the tyrant loosed his threatening tongue,
Long-stifled passion raging unrestrained:
No longer hope that pardon may be gained,
Beautiful face, high spirit, bashful heart!
Vainly would Love, since mercy is disdained,
And Anger flings his most envenomed dart,
In aid of you his else protecting shield impart!

XXVI.

Doomed in tormenting fire to die, they lay
Hands on the maid; her arms with rough cords twining,
Rudely her mantle chaste they tear away,
And the white veil that o'er her drooped declining:
This she endured in silence unrepining,
Yet her firm breast some virgin tremors shook;
And her warm cheek, Aurora's late outshining,
Waned into whiteness, and a colour took,
Like that of the pale rose, or lily of the brook.

XXVII.

The crowd collect; the sentence is divulged;
With them Olindo comes, by pity swayed;
It might be that the youth the thought indulged,
What if his own Sophronia were the maid!
There stand the busy officers arrayed
For the last act, here swift the flames arise;
But when the pinioned beauty stands displayed
To the full gaze of his inquiring eyes,—
'*Tis* she! he bursts through all, the crowd before him flies.

XXVIII.

Aloud he cries; "To her, oh not to her
The crime belongs, though frenzy may mislead!
She planned not, dared not, could not, king, incur
Sole and unskilled the guilt of such a deed!
How lull the guards, or by what process speed
The sacred Image from its vaulted cell?
The theft was mine! and 't is my right to bleed!"
Alas for him! how wildly and how well
He loved the' unloving maid, let this avowal tell.

XXIX.

"I marked where your high Mosque receives the air
And light of heaven; I climbed the dizzy steep;
I reached a narrow opening; entered there,
And stole the Saint, whilst all were hushed in sleep:
Mine was the crime, and shall another reap
The pain and glory? grant not her desire!
The chains are mine; for me the guards may heap
Around the ready stake the penal fire;
For me the flames ascend; 't is mine, that funeral pyre!"

XXX.

Sophronia raised to him her face,—her eye
Was filled with pity and a starting tear;
She spoke—the soul of sad humanity
Was in her voice, "What frenzy brings thee here,
Unhappy innocent! is death so dear,
Or am I so ill able to sustain
A mortal's wrath, that thou must needs appear?
I have a heart, too, that can death disdain,
Nor ask for life's last hour companionship in pain."

XXXI.

Thus she appeals to him: but scorning life,
His settled soul refuses to retreat:
Oh glorious scene, where in sublimest strife
High-minded Virtue and Affection meet!
Where death's the prize of conquest, and defeat
Seals its own safety, yet remains unblest!
But indignation at their fond deceit,
And rage, the more inflames the tyrant's breast,
The more this constant pair the palm of guilt contest.

XXXII.

He deems his power despised, and that in scorn
Of him they spurn the punishment assigned:
"Let," he exclaimed, "the fitting palm adorn
The brows of both! both pleas acceptance find!"
Beckoning he bids the prompt tormentors bind
Their galling chains around the youth—'t is done;
Both to one stake are, back to back, consigned,
Like sunflowers twisted from their worshipped sun,
Compelled the last fond looks of sympathy to shun.

XXXIII.

Around them now the unctuous pyre was piled,
And the fanned flame was rising in the wind,
When, full of mournful thoughts, in accents wild,
The lover to his mate in death repined:
"Is this the bond then which I hoped should bind
Our lives in blissful marriage? this the fire
Of bridal faith, commingling mind with mind,
Which, I believed, should in our hearts inspire
Like warmth of sacred zeal and delicate desire?

XXXIV.

"Far other flames Love promised to impart,
Than those our envious planets here prepare;
Too, ah too long they kept our hands apart,
But harshly now they join them in despair!
Yet does it soothe, since by a mode so rare
Condemned to die, thy torments to partake,
Forbid by fate thy sweetnesses to share;
If tears I shed, 't is but for thy dear sake,
Not mine,—with thee beside, I bless the burning stake!

XXXV.

"And oh! this doom would be indeed most blest,
My sharpest sufferings blandishments divine,
Might I but be permitted, breast to breast,
On thy sweet lips my spirit to resign;
If thou too, panting toward one common shrine,
Wouldst the next happy instant parting spend
Thy latest sighs in sympathy on mine!"
Sorrowing he spake; she when his plaints had end,
Did thus his fond discourse most sweetly reprehend.

XXXVI.

"Far other aspirations, other plaints
Than these, dear friend, the solemn hour should claim.
Think what reward God offers to his saints;
Let meek repentance raise a loftier aim:
These torturing fires, if suffered in his name,
Will, bland as zephyrs, waft us to the blest;
Regard the sun, how beautiful his flame!
How fine a sky invites him to the west!
These seem to soothe our pangs, and summon us to rest."

XXXVII.

The Pagans lifting up their voices wept;
In stifled sorrow wept the Faithful too;
E'en the stern king was touched,—a softness crept
O'er his fierce heart, ennobling, pure, and new;
He felt, he scorned it, struggled to subdue,
And lest his wavering firmness should relent,
His eyes averted, and his steps withdrew:
Sophronia's spirit only was unbent;
She yet lamented not, for whom all else lament.

XXXVIII.

In midst of their distress, a knight behold,
(So would it seem) of princely port! whose vest,
And arms of curious fashion, grained with gold,
Bespeak some foreign and distinguished guest;
The silver tigress on the helm impressed,
Which for a badge is borne, attracts all eyes,—
A noted cognizance, the' accustomed crest
Used by Clorinda, whence conjectures rise,
Herself the stranger is—nor false is their surmise.

XXXIX.

All feminine attractions, aims, and parts,
She from her childhood cared not to assume;
Her haughty hand disdained all servile arts,
The needle, distaff, and Arachne's loom;
Yet, though she left the gay and gilded room
For the free camp, kept spotless as the light
Her virgin fame, and proud of glory's plume,
With pride her aspect armed; she took delight
Stern to appear, and stern, she charmed the gazer's sight.

XL.

Whilst yet a girl, she with her little hand
Lashed and reined in the rapid steed she raced,
Tossed the huge javelin, wrestled on the sand,
And by gymnastic toils her sinews braced;
Then through the devious wood and mountain-waste
Tracked the struck lion to his entered den,
Or in fierce wars a nobler quarry chased;
And thus in fighting field and forest glen,
A man to savage beasts, a savage seemed to men.

XLI.

From Persia now she comes, with all her skill
The Christians to resist, though oft has she
Strewed with their blood the field, till scarce a rill
Remained, that ran not purple to the sea.
Here now arrived, the dreadful pageantry
Of death presents itself,—the crowd—the pyre—
And the bound pair; solicitous to see,
And know what crime condemns them to the fire,
Forward she spurs her steed, and hastens to inquire.

XLII.

The throng falls back, and she awhile remains,
The fettered pair more closely to survey;
One she sees silent, one she sees complains,
The stronger spirit nerves the weaker prey:
She sees him mourn like one whom the sad sway
Of powerful pity doth to tears chastise,
Not grief, or grief not for himself; but aye
Mute kneels the maid, her blue besecching eyes
So fixed on heaven, she seems in heaven ere yet she dies.

XLIII.

Clorinda melts, and with them both condoles;
Some tears she sheds, but greater tenderness
Feels for her grief who most her grief controls,—
The silence moves her much, the weeping less;
No longer now does she delay to press
For information; turning towards one
Of reverend years, she said with eagerness,
"Who are they? speak! and oh, what crime has won
This death? in Mercy's name, declare the deed they've done!"

XLIV.

Thus she entreats; a brief reply he gives,
But such as well explains the whole event:
Amazed she heard it, and as soon conceives
That they are both sincerely innocent;
Her heart is for them, she is wholly bent
To avert their fate, if either arms can aid,
Or earnest prayers secure the king's consent;
The fire she nears, commands it to be stayed,
That now approached them fast, and to the' attendants said.

XLV.

"Let none of you presume to prosecute
Your barbarous office, till the king I see;
My word I pledge that at Clorinda's suit,
Your fault he will forgive, if fault it be:"
Moved by her speech and queenlike dignity
The guards obey, and she departs in quest
Of the stern monarch, urgent of her plea:
Midway they met; the monarch she addressed;
And in this skilful mode her generous purpose pressed.

XLVI.

"I am Clorinda; thou wilt know perchance
The name, from vague remembrance or renown;
And here I come to save with sword and lance
Our common Faith, and thine endangered crown,
Impose the labour, lay the' adventure down,
Sublime I fear it not, nor low despise;
In open field or in the straitened town,
Prepared I stand for every enterprise,
Where'er the danger calls, where'er the labour lies!"

XLVII.

"What region so remote," replied the king,
"From the sun's track or Asia's golden zone,
To which, heroic maid, on wonder's wing
Thy fame has not arrived, thy glory flown?
Now that with mine thou deign'st to join thine own
Unconquered sword, I shake away all sense
Of fear, and hope for my assaulted throne;
No—I could have no surer confidence,
If e'en united hosts were armed in my defence!

XLVIII.

"Now then the mighty Godfrey comes too late
To my desire; exploits are thy demand,
But only worthy thy sublime estate
I hold the daring, difficult, and grand;
The rule of all our warriors to thy hand
Do I concede; thy standard be their guide
In battle, and a law thy least command!"—
She nor assumed his praises, nor denied,
But bowed her grateful thanks, and courteously replied:

XLIX.

"'Twould be assuredly a thing most rare,
If the reward the service should precede;
But of thy bounty confident, I dare
For future toils solicit, as my meed,
Yon lovers' pardon; since the charge indeed
Rests on no evidence, 'twas hard to press
The point at all, but this I waive, nor plead
On those sure signs which, urged, thou must confess
Their hands quite free from crime, or own their guilt far less.

L.

"Yet will I say, though here the common mind
Condemns the Christians of the theft, for me,
Sufficient reasons in mine own I find
To doubt, dispute, disparage the decree;
To set their idols in our sanctuary
Was an irreverence to our laws, howe'er
Urged by the sorcerer; should the Prophet see
E'en idols of our own established there?
Much less then those of men whose lips his faith forswear:

LI.

"The Christian statue ravished from your sight
To Allah therefore rather I impute,
In sign that he will let no foreign rite
Of superstition his pure place pollute:
Spells and enchantments may Ismeno suit,
Leave him to use such weapons at his will;
But shall we warriors by a wand dispute?
No! no! our talisman, our hope, our skill,
Lie in our swords alone, and they shall serve us still?"

LII.

She ceased; and he, though mercy could with pain
Subdue a heart so full of rage and pride,
Relents, her reasons move, her prayers constrain,—
Such intercessor must not be denied;
Thus, though reluctant, he at length complied:
"The plea for the fair pleader I receive;
I can refuse thee nothing; this," he cried,
"May justice be or mercy,—let them live;
Guiltless—I set them free, or guilty I forgive!"

LIII.

Restored to life and liberty, how blest,
How truly blest was young Olindo's fate!
For sweet Sophronia's blushes might attest,
That Love at length has touched her delicate
And generous bosom; from the stake in state
They to the altar pass; severely tried,
In doom and love already made his mate,
She now objects not to become his bride,
And grateful live with him who would for her have died.

LIV.

But as the tyrant deemed it insecure
That such rare virtues should so near combine,
Their pleasant home he forced them to abjure,
And banished both the bounds of Palestine;
Nor wholly yet renouncing his design
Against the rest, he follows up the blow;
Some does he exile, some does he confine;
Oh with what sorrow, yea, with what deep woe,
Their babes, their ancient sires, and dwellings they forego!

LV.

For those alone his jealousy exiled,
Of vigorous manhood and sagacious wit;—
The softer sex, the grandsire, and the child,
For daring deeds and fearful aims unfit,
As pledges he retains; the many quit
Their homes as wanderers, many brave his hate,
And, brooding in rebellion, but submit
To his scorned power his fall to' accelerate;—
These join the Christian host now entering Emmaus gate:

LVI.

Emmaus, a city at so short a space
From regal Salem, that a youth in June,
Walking for pleasure at a careless pace,
From dewy morn, may reach the town by noon;
So near, what joys the soldiers' hearts attune!
Oh with what deep desire they burn, to tread
The glorious City they shall see so soon!
But the sun hastens to his seagreen bed,
And Godfrey gives command the evening tents to spread.

LVII.

They were already pitched, and twilight gloom
Was gathering fast round eve's declining light,
When lo! two Barons in a strange costume,
And pomp of foreign bearing, came in sight;
Their state seemed fashioned to a peaceful plight,
And every desultory movement told
A friendly purpose; tendant on each knight
Rode many a page and armour-bearer bold;
From Egypt's king they come, high argument to hold.

LVIII.

The one, Alethes, of vile lineage sprung,
Who in obscurest shade his course began,
Rose, by smooth flatteries and a fluent tongue,
To the first honours of the grave Divan;
A supple, crafty, various-witted man,—
Prompt at deceit, perfidious in his phrase,
He with a smile of sweetness could trepan;
And wove his webs in such ingenious ways,
That each calumnious charge had all the air of praise.

LIX.

Argantes the Circassian, his compeer,
Came to the Court a stranger, but endowed
With valour equal to the loftiest sphere,
Was soon a Satrap of the realm avowed;
Impatient, fierce, implacable, and proud,
In arms unwearied and unmatched, he trod;
A scorner of all faiths, with vaunts aloud
He braved the world; his argument his nod,
He made his will his law, and his good sword his God.

LX.

They asked an audience, and on equal feet
Entered the tent of Godfrey: him they found
In simple vesture on a simple seat,
Calmly conversing with his chieftains round;
But genuine worth, though negligent, is crowned
With a sufficient ornament, arrayed
In its own excellence; no mark profound
Of his respect the frank Argantes paid,
But with unstudied ease just bowed his haughty head.

LXI.

But on his heart Alethes laid his hand,
And bowed his head to earth, and every sign
Of honour showed, that glory could demand,
Or the smooth flattery of the East combine.
He spake, and from his lips than golden wine
More sweet, the floods of eloquence distilled;
And as the Franks the speech of Palestine
Now comprehended, and at need could build,
'Twas thus his rich-toned voice the mute assembly filled:

LXII.

"O Thou, the' alone deserving to preside
O'er these illustrious heroes, who have known
Through thy wise counsels, hitherto, the pride
Of conquest—laurels won, and states o'erthrown!
Thy name, which brooks not in the narrow zone
Of brave Alcides' bounds to be confined,
E'en to the land of Egypt has been blown;—
Through all our realms does Fame her clarion wind,
Sounding thy glorious deeds from Nile to utmost Ind.

LXIII.

"Nor midst so many Princes is there one
Whose deepest wonder these do not excite;
But mine indeed receives them, not alone
With admiration, but supreme delight;
He joys to show them in each shifting light,
And loves in thee what with the rest but cause
Envy and fear; admiring thus thy might,
And to thy valour yielding meet applause,
With thee he seeks to join, in love if not in laws.

LXIV.

"Urged then by this benign desire, he sends,
The branch of peace to ask and to bestow,
And since not Faith can mediate to our ends,
Let mutual Virtue wreathe the sacred bough;
But since the rumour meets his ear, that thou
Art armed to drive from Salem his ally,
His princely mind he wills that we avow,
Ere the full tempest overcasts the sky,
So may succeeding ills thy borders not come nigh

LXV.

"He begs thy generous spirit to forbear,
And rest content with what thy sword has won;
Nor vex Judea, but all regions spare
That lie beneath the favour of his sun:
He, on his part no sacrifice will shun
To fix thy infant power upon a rock;
Whence, should the Turks and Persians seek to' o'errun
The land once more, united you shall mock
Their overweening hopes, and smile away the shock.

LXVI.

"Thy mighty deeds in this brief period wrought,
Years of oblivion shall corrode in vain!
Armies and cities conquered, perils sought,
Fatigues surmounted, unknown wilds made plain!
So that the nations far and near remain
Dumb with amazement, stupid with dismay;
Yet other empires thou perhaps might'st gain,
But Glory is thy bankrupt, nor would they,
Void of renown, the toil of victory repay.

LXVII.

"Now is thy noon of honour, but the night
Succeeds to noon; and wise it surely were
To shun the dubious accidents of fight,—
If conqueror, conquest proves a fruitless care;
But—once beguiled in fate's malignant snare,
Empire, past spoils, and victories, all are crossed!
He is the fool of fortune who should dare
To stake a sure against a doubtful cost,
Where slight the gain must prove, but great the' advantage lost!

LXVIII.

"Yet the advice of some one whom it grieves
That others long should keep what they acquire,
The having gathered victory's laurel leaves
In every contest, and the' innate desire
Which glows, and always lights its fiercest fire
In greatest hearts, to see thy harnessed car
Drawn by dependent kings,—those will[1] inspire
Thy mind, perchance, to banish peace afar,
With a more eager zeal than others angry war.

LXIX.

"Such will exhort thee to pursue the path
Which Fate expands to thy dilating eye,
And not to sheathe the famous sword whose wrath
Calls down obsequious conquest from the sky,
Till Mahomet's tall fanes in ruin lie,
And Asia has become one wilderness
Resounding only to the dragon's cry:
Things sweet to hear, deceits in brilliant dress,
But full of dangerous ills, and pregnant with distress.

LXX.

"But if thine eye no keen resentment veils,
If it strikes not the light of reason blind,
With fear, not hope, must thou regard the scales
Of war, and tremble as the beam 's inclined;
For Fortune's favour is a varying wind,
Wafting now ill, now good,—now joy, now woe!
She least rewards us when she seems most kind:
Oft serpents lurk where freshest roses blow,
And for the loftiest flight a gulf yawns deep below.

LXXI.

"Say, if Cassano's son with his allies,
Persian and Turk, the struggle should renew;
If to thy cost all Egypt should arise,
In gold, arms, wisdom, mighty to subdue;
Whence, as more near the gathering tempest drew,
Wouldst thou thine armaments command, or where
Escape the peril? wouldst thou seek, anew,
From the Greek prince professions yet more fair,
And, of his aid assured, the frightful contest dare?

LXXII.

"Who knows not to what end the Grecian swears!
Yet from a single treason gather all,—
From thousands, rather, for a thousand snares
Has he disposed, thy warriors to enthral;
Think of his avarice, his mistrust recal!
Will he who owned your mission, yet withstood,
Now risk his life at your beseeching call?
He who forbade the route by all pursued,
Yield to a tottering cause his own luxurious blood?

LXXIII.

"But, it may be, that all thy hopes repose
On these brave hearts that gird thee as a zone;
Perhaps thou think'st to crush united foes
Lightly as one by one they were o'erthrown;
Although thy squadrons, as thyself must own,
Are much reduced by hardships and by fight;
Though fresh antagonists surround thy throne;
And, numerous as our locusts to the sight,
With Turk and Persian both the' Egyptians may unite.

LXXIV.

"But granting Heaven's almightiness decree
That War's devouring minister, the sword,
Which fatal proves to others, harm not thee,
Famine will bow thee still! when, unrestored,
Life's rosy currents from the heart are poured,
Where wilt thou turn? what refuge will remain?
Quails in the desert will thy God afford?
Wave thy bright sword, thy javelin shake!—'t is vain!
Victory will nothing be but mockery of thy pain.

LXXV.

"The prudent people, politic in need,
Have fired their cultured fields, despoiled their bowers,
And ere thy coming stored the golden seed
In stubborn walls and high protecting towers;
Thou, whose hot zeal spurred on the lazy hours
To speed thee here, how wilt thou banquet these,
Thy horse and foot? Thou wilt reply, 'My Powers
Are safe, my rich Armada sweeps the seas:'
Does then your life depend upon the shifting breeze?

LXXVI.

"Perhaps thy Genius rules the winds to be
Stormy or calm, as it may suit thy will!
Though proof to prayers and wailings, the deaf sea,
Like a lulled child, will hear thy voice, and still
Its stormy waves! but have we then no skill
With the brave Turks and Persians to combine,
Man the joint navy, to the breezes shrill
Spread out its sails, and rushing through the brine,
Boldly confront those vast leviathans of thine?

LXXVII.

"A double victory must thou win, to gain
In this emprise the merit of success;
One battle lost makes all thine efforts vain,
Makes glory shame, and luxury nakedness;
For if our winged fleets thy fleet oppress
At sea, the distant host with hunger dies,
And if the host in battle we distress,
Thy naval spoils are vain indemnities—
Thy watery empire gained, an unsubstantial prize!

LXXVIII.

"Now, in this aspect of affairs, if thou
The peace and friendship of our king decline,
Let truth but license have, she will avow
Thy other virtues far thy sense outshine;
But ah, may Heaven, if such be thy design,
From the enthralling charm thy mind release!
That so at length afflicted Palestine—
That Asia so may from her sorrows cease,
And thou thy victor's fruits enjoy in perfect peace!

LXXIX

"And you, who in deep troubles, perils dark,
And fancied glory, are with him combined!
Let not kind Fortune tempt you to embark
In other wars; but dread the woes behind!
The pilot who, from the capricious wind,
O'er seas where quicksands lurk and breakers roar
Has steered his vessel to the port assigned,
Should gather in his canvass, heave ashore,
Nor trust the traitor winds and cruel Ocean more!"

LXXX.

Alethes ceased: and the brave Lords returned
A murmur like the sound of fire, that told
How angrily his overtures they spurned;
Fierce were their gestures, and their action bold;
Godfrey his eyes thrice round the circle rolled;
Thrice the knights' faces scanned with conscious pride
Then, as in act his purpose to unfold,
The fluent Copt significantly eyed,
And with determined tone thus placidly replied:

LXXXI.

"Bravely, Ambassador, hast thou set forth,
Now mild, now stern, the terms on which you treat:
If thy king love me, and applaud our worth,
The love is grateful, as the praise is sweet;
The after-portion of thy speech, replete
With threats of war from Heathendom combined,
And like denunciations, I will meet,
And in the native frankness of my mind
Answer in simple words, sincere, if less refined.

LXXXII.

"Know, then, that we have borne all this distress
By land and sea—war, want, reverses—all!
To the sole end that we might gain access
To sacred Salem's venerable wall;
That we might free the Faithful from their thrall,
And win from God his blessing and reward;
From this no threats our spirit can appal,
For this no terms will be esteemed too hard—
Life, honours, kingdoms lost, or dignity debarred.

LXXXIII.

"For not the lusts of power or gold affect
The hearts of those who rank beneath the Cross;
Heaven's gracious Father chasten and correct
The deadly sins, if such our souls engross!
Nor let the' insidious plague, the pleasing gloss
Of honeyed guilt infect us, or delude!
But may his holy fires purge off our dross,
Through stony hearts infuse a milder mood,
Bind the rebellious will, and teach us to be good!

LXXXIV.

"This has impelled us, guided, guides us now
Through every peril, obstacle and snare;
This makes the vales aspire, the mountains bow,
Tempers the summer heat, the winter air;
This makes the loud seas still, the rivers bare,
Chains the wild tempest in its secret cave,
Sends the four seasons mild, the blue skies fair,
Beats down high bulwarks and unnerves the brave;
Scatters our foes in flight, or dooms to the dark grave!

LXXXV.

"Hence zeal and hope, hence strength, hence safety springs
Not from our own force, wasted, worn, and frail;
Not from the rich Armada's outspread wings;
Not from the succours that from Greece may sail!
Power, hosts, and fleets, were else of small avail;
But since high Heaven, our banner thus befriends,
We little reck what other aids may fail;
Who knows both how it strikes, and how defends,
Will ask none other shield when peril swift descends.

LXXXVI.

"But should our sins, or secret judgment doom
Us, of his aid deprived, to pass away,
Which of us would not yearn to have his tomb,
Where once the limbs of the Celestial lay?
Yes, we shall die, nor envy them the play
Of being who survive! yes, we shall fall,
But fall not unrevenged, in meek array;
Asia shall smile not at our funeral;
We shall not grieve to die, but furnish grief for all.

LXXXVII.

"As others fear and shun the battle-field,
Think not the happy arts of peace we fly;
That union with thy king no joy would yield,
Or that we should not rate his friendship high;
But Palestine does not subjected lie
To him; thou know'st it; whence then all this care
On its account? would he to us deny
Conquest of others' states? let him forbear;
And rule in peace his own, rich, flourishing, and fair!"

LXXXVIII.

Thus answered Godfrey, and his calm reply
Stung to the quick Argantes' heart of pride;
He did not veil it, but approaching nigh,
With quivering lips in proud assumption cried:
"Who wills not peace the battle can abide!
Ne'er was there penury of risk or woe
To those whose rashness dared to be defied;
Too well a warlike spirit wilt thou shew,
If the fair gifts we bring thou carest to forego!"

LXXXIX.

He took his mantle by the skirt; he curved
As to an urn the implicated fold,
And holding it on high, his language nerved
With angrier eye and malice uncontrolled:
"Ho, thou contemner of strong Fate, behold!
I bring thee in this urn both war and peace;
Make now thy choice, and quickly be it told—
War, peace or war; whichever most may please—
What more thou wouldst demand, thine own right hand must seize!"

XC.

At his fierce gesture and disdainful voice,
Inflamed, from all their seats the Barons sprung;
They waited not to hear their Leader's choice,
"War! war!" they cried, with simultaneous tongue;
He far abroad the fatal mantle flung,
And shook it in their teeth: "Then evermore
Take mortal war!" he cried: so wildly rung
The words, it seemed the adamantine door
Which awful Janus keeps, flew open to the roar:

XCI.

It seemed that from the shaking of the fold
Gigantic Discord and mad Fury flew;
That in his frightful eyes they might behold
Megara and Alecto rise to view;
So stood, perchance, the Giant, when he drew
To Shinaär's plain his nations, to defy
The God of Heaven, and as the huge tower grew
Upward from earth, perchance with such an eye
He watched it pass the clouds, and threat the starry sky.

XCII.

Then Godfrey spake: "Our answer ye have heard;
Back to your monarch, and our choice relate:
Here let him haste, or, on a Prince's word,
Nile shall behold us at Alcairo's gate."
Then in mild accents ending high debate,
He honours them with gifts of noble price;
A splendid helmet tempered to rebate
The keenest falchion, and of rare device,
He to Alethes gave, a spoil from conquered Nice.

XCIII.

Argantes has a sword of princely cost,
Whose hilt and pommel gay with jewels flame,
Set in bright gold so curiously embossed,
That the rare workmanship might almost shame
The rich material; he its tempered frame
Shrewdly examined, the keen edge assayed,
Found the fine steel the' adornments well became,
And said to Godfrey, as he sheathed the blade:
"Soon shalt thou see the use that of thy gift is made!"

XCIV.

No more he deigned, but took his leave: "And now,
My brave Alethes, let us both begone;
I to Jerusalem, to Egypt thou,—
Thou when morn's roses o'er the skies are strown,
With our attendant pages, I alone
By the nocturnal stars. You need not us,
Nor our advices to instruct the throne;
Bear thou the answer—I'll no longer thus
Stand trifling here, since arms the subject must discuss."

XCV.

Thus parts the foe who came ambassador:
Whether his well or ill-timed haste offend
The law of realms and usages of war
He thinks not, cares not, so he gains his end;
Nor waits to hear the answer which his friend
Has on his lips, but through the twilight-shade
His steps to high Jerusalem ascend,
Impatient of delay; and those who stayed,
Did with no less disdain the slow-paced hours upbraid.

XCVI.

'T is eve; 't is night; a holy quiet broods
O'er the mute world—winds, waters are at peace,
The beasts lie couched amid unstirring woods,
The fishes slumber in the sounds and seas;
No twittering bird sings farewell from the trees,
Hushed is the dragon's cry, the lion's roar;
Beneath her glooms a glad oblivion frees
The heart from care, its weary labours o'er,
Carrying divine repose and sweetness to its core.

XCVII.

But not the midnight hush, nor starlight balm,
Nor sweet oblivion of all things in sleep,
Can to the Chief or army bring the calm
Of blest repose, such eager watch they keep,
In their desire to see the morning peep,
And give that long-sought City to their sight,
Where they the fruits of battle hope to reap;
Oft looking out to mark if yet the light,
Breaking the dappled East, clears up the shades of night.

CANTO III.

Stanza xxi.

ARGUMENT.

CLORINDA bravely meets the Franks in fight,
When at Jerusalem the host arrives;
Erminia's love awakens at the sight
Of Tancred in the field; his own revives,
When a strange knight, with whom in war he strives,
Appears unmasked; Argantes at a blow
The brave Adventurers of their Chief deprives:
Dudon interred, for timbers to lay low
The town, to antique groves the Latin soldiers go.

I.

The odorous air, morn's messenger, now spread
Its wings to herald, in serenest skies,
Aurora issuing forth, her radiant head
Adorned with roses plucked in Paradise;
When in full panoply the hosts arise,
And loud and spreading murmurs upward fly,
Ere yet the trumpet sings; its melodies
They miss not long, the trumpet's tuneful cry
Gives the command to march, shrill sounding to the sky.

II.

The skilful Captain, with a gentle rein
Guides their desires, and animates their force;
And though 't would seem more easy to restrain
Charybdis in its mad volubil course,
Or bridle Boreas in, when gruffly hoarse
He tempests Apenninus and the grey
Ship shaking Ocean to its deepest source,—
He ranks them, urges, rules them on the way;
Swiftly they march, yet still with swiftness under sway.

III.

Wing'd is each heart, and winged every heel;
They fly, yet notice not how fast they fly;
But by the time the dewless meads reveal
The fervent sun's ascension in the sky,
Lo, towered Jerusalem salutes the eye!
A thousand pointing fingers tell the tale;
"Jerusalem!" a thousand voices cry,
"All hail, Jerusalem!" hill, down, and dale
Catch the glad sounds, and shout, "Jerusalem, all hail!"

IV.

Thus, when a crew of fearless voyagers
Seeking new lands, spread their audacious sails
In the hoar Arctic, under unknown stars,
Sport of the faithless waves and treacherous gales;
If, as their little bark the billow scales,
One views the long-wished headland from the mast,
With merry shouts the far-off coast he hails,
Each points it out to each, until at last
They lose in present joy the troubles of the past.

V.

To the pure pleasure which that first far view
In their reviving spirits sweetly shed,
Succeeds a deep contrition, feelings new,—
Grief touched with awe, affection mixed with dread;
Scarce dare they now upraise the abject head,
Or turn to Zion their desiring eyes,
The chosen city! where Messias bled,
Defrauded Death of his long tyrannies,
New clothed his limbs with life, and reassumed the skies!

VI.

Low accents, plaintive whispers, groans profound,
Sighs of a people that in gladness grieves,
And melancholy murmurs float around,
Till the sad air a thrilling sound receives,
Like that which sobs amidst the dying leaves,
When with autumnal winds the forest waves;
Or dash of an insurgent sea that heaves
On lonely rocks, or locked in winding caves,
Hoarse through their hollow aisles in wild low cadence raves.

VII.

Each, at his Chief's example, lays aside
His scarf and feathered casque, with every gay
And glittering ornament of knightly pride,
And barefoot treads the consecrated way.
Their thoughts, too, suited to their changed array,
Warm tears devout their eyes in showers diffuse,—
Tears, that the haughtiest temper might allay;
And yet, as though to weep they did refuse,
Thus to themselves their hearts of hardness they accuse.

VIII.

"Here, Lord, where currents from thy wounded side
Stained the besprinkled ground with sanguine red,
Should not these two quick springs at least, their tide
In bitter memory of thy passion shed!
And melt'st thou not, my icy heart, where bled
Thy dear Redeemer? still must pity sleep?
My flinty bosom, why so cold and dead?
Break, and with tears the hallowed region steep!
If that thou weep'st not now, for ever shouldst thou weep!"

IX.

Meanwhile the Guard that from a lofty tower
In the far city cast abroad his view,
Marked the dust rise, and like a thunder-shower
Printed in air, turn dark the' ethereal blue;
The gloomy cloud seemed pregnant as it flew
With fire,—anon, bright metals flashed between
Its shaken wreaths, and as it nearer drew,
Dim through the storm were apparitions seen—
Spearmen, and issuing steeds, and chiefs of godlike mien.

X.

He saw, and raised his terrible alarm!
"Oh rise, all citizens below, arise;
Mount to the walls; haste! arm! this instant arm!
Lo, what a dust upon the whirlwind flies,
And lo, the lightning of their arms!" he cries,—
"The foeman is at hand!" then, yet more loud,
He calls, "Shall the swift foe the town surprise?
Quick seize your weapons; mark the dusty cloud
That hither rolls! it wraps all heaven within its shroud!"

XI.

The simple infant and the aged sire,
Matrons and trembling maids, to whom belong
Nor strength, nor skill to make defence, retire,
A pale, disconsolate and suppliant throng,
In sad procession to the mosques: the strong
In spirit as in limbs obey the call;
Seizing their arms in haste, they speed along,
Part flock to guard the gates, part man the wall;
The king to all parts flies, sees, cares, provides for all.

XII.

His orders given, for every need prepared,
He from the thickening tumult has withdrawn,
And scales a tower that 'twixt two portals reared,
O'erlooks the plain, and holds the hills in scorn.
His steps Erminia, lovely as the morn,
At call attends; with all respect received,
His royal Court her winning charms adorn,
Since Antioch by the Christians was achieved,
And o'er her kingly sire the orphan-princess grieved.

XIII.

Meantime Clorinda hastes against the Franks,
First of her band, with many a gallant knight,
Whilst in a secret porch Argantes ranks
His troops, prepared for rescue or for fight.
Her words, intrepid as her mien, excite
Fire in all hearts, as thus the heroine spoke:
"Well it becomes us, armed in Asia's rights,
To found the loosening of her hated yoke
On the auspicious base of some determined stroke!"

XIV.

Lo, Fortune, as she speaks, the' occasion yields!
A band of Franks sent onward to forecast
The army's wants, from foraging the fields,
Near them, with flocks and herds returning, passed;
She towards them, and to her rushed as fast
Their Chief, when he beheld her silver crest;—
Guardo his name, a man of puissance vast,
But weak with her the laurel to contest;—
Onward abrupt they drove, their lances laid in rest.

XV.

Breathless to earth the hapless Frank was strook
By the fierce shock, in either army's sight;
From his mischance the shouting Pagans took
Their joyous augury of the future fight:
Onward she flew upon the rest, the might
Of numbers flashing in her single blade;
Fast in their serried ranks she poured the light;
Her warriors followed through the gap she made,
Where her assault had been, where yet her falchion played.

XVI.

Soon from the spoiler they the spoil obtain;
The Franks give way, yet to their standard keep,
Till slow the summit of a hill they gain,
And stand assisted by the rising steep:
When as a tempest, which the whirlwinds sweep
Abroad, breaks loose, and in aërial dance
Warm from its skirts the vivid lightnings leap,
Tancred at Godfrey's beck made swift advance
With his Italian troop, and couched his quivering lance.

XVII.

The king beheld him from his tower, and deemed
Him of all men the choicest cavalier,
So young, so resolute, so brave he seemed,
And bore with such a grace his beamy spear;
Whence he bespake the fair Erminia near,
Whose palpitating heart in secret thrilled
As at the sight of something deeply dear;
"Well shouldst thou know, in many a fighting field
Marked out, each Christian knight, howe'er in arms concealed."

XVIII.

"Who then is this, that in fierce grace outstrips
All other knights?" In room of a reply,
The quick breath fluttered round her lovely lips,
The big tear trembled in her full blue eye:
These she reclaimed, yet not so carelessly
As to escape regard,—a conscious red
Tinged her averted cheek, the sudden sigh,
Choked to a groan, spoke plain of feeling fled,
And o'er her tearful eyes a radiant circlet spread.

XIX.

In these delusive words her answer ran,
Veiling her love beneath the mask of hate;
"Too well I know the' inexorable man,
And should, amidst a thousand! but of late,
His savage soul I saw him satiate
With slaughter,—saw him flesh his angry steel
Upon the best of our Assyrian state:
Cruel are all his strokes! the wounds they deal,
No magic charm can stanch, no breathing balsam heal!

XX.

"He is Prince Tancred; oh that he, some day,
Might be my slave! I would not wish him dead;
Glad that he lives, so might I thus repay
In sweet revenge my wrongs upon his head!
That would indeed be some small joy," she said,
And the king failed not, as she wished, to wrest
The meaning of her words, ascribed, instead
Of love, to hate: she ceased, but from her breast
Stole forth a mournful sigh that would not be repressed.

XXI.

Meanwhile Clorinda rushes to assail
The Prince, and level lays her spear renowned;
Both lances strike, and on the barred ventayle
In shivers fly, and she remains discrowned;
For, burst its silver rivets, to the ground
Her helmet leaped, (incomparable blow!)
And by the rudeness of the shock unbound,
Her sex to all the field emblazoning so,
Loose to the charmed winds her golden tresses flow.

XXII.

Then blazed her eyes, then flashed her angry glance,
Sweet e'en in wrath; in laughter then what grace
Would not be theirs!—but why that thoughtful trance?
And, Tancred, why that scrutinizing gaze?
Know'st not thine idol? lo, the same dear face,
Whence sprang the flame that on thy heart has preyed!
The sculptured image in its shrine retrace,
And in thy foe behold the noble maid,
Who to the sylvan spring for cool refreshment strayed.

XXIII.

He, who her painted shield and silver crest
Marked not at first, stood spell-bound at the sight;
She, guarding as she could her head, still pressed
The' assault, and struck, but he forebore the fight,
And to the rest transferring his despite,
Plied fast his whirling sword; yet not the less
Ceased she to follow and upbraid his flight,
With taunt and menace heightening his distress;
And, "Turn, false knight!" she cried, loud shouting through the press.

XXIV.

Struck, he not once returns the stroke, nor seeks
So much to ward the meditated blow,
As in those eyes and on those charming cheeks
To gaze, whence Passion's fond emotions flow:
"Void," to himself he says, "too cruel foe,
Void fall the strokes which that beloved arm
Distributes in its wrath! no fatal throe
Is that thy scimitar creates; the harm
Is in thy angry looks, that wound me while they charm!"

XXV.

Resolved at length not unconfessed to fall,
Though hopeless quite her pity to obtain,
That she might know she struck her willing thrall,
Defenceless, suppliant, crouching to her chain;
"O thou," said he, "that followest o'er the plain
Me as thine only foe, of all this wide
Presented people! yet thy wrath restrain;
The press let us forsake, so may aside
Thy force with mine be proved, my skill with thine be tried.

XXVI.

"Then shalt thou measure in the face of day
Thy strength with mine, nor own my valour less."
Pleased she assents, and boldly leads the way,
Unhelmed,—he follows in his mute distress.
Already stood the' impatient Warrioress
Prepared, already had she struck, when he
Exclaimed; "Hold! hold! ere we ourselves address
To the stern fight, 't is fit we should agree
Upon the terms of strife; fix first what these shall be!"

XXVII.

Her arm she stayed; strong love and wild despair
A reckless courage to his mind impart;
"These be the terms," said he, "since you forswear
All peace with me, pluck out my panting heart,
Mine own no more! I willingly shall part
With life, if farther life thy pride offend;
Long have I pined with love's tormenting smart;
'T is fit the fond and feverish strife should end;
Take then the worthless life which I will ne'er defend.

XXVIII.

"Behold! my arms are offered,—I present
My breast without defence,—spare not to smite;
Or shall I speed the task? I am content
To strip my cuirass off, and thus invite
Thy cruel steel!"—in harsher self-despite,
The mournful youth would have proclaimed his woes,
But suddenly, in craft or panic fright,
The Pagans yield to their pursuing foes,
And his brave troops rush by, and numbers interpose.

XXIX.

Like driven deer before the' Italian band
They yield, they fly in swiftness unconfined;
One base pursuer saw Clorinda stand,
Her rich locks spread like sunbeams on the wind,
And raised his arm in passing, from behind,
To stab secure the undefended maid;
But Tancred, conscious of the blow designed,
Shrieked out, "Beware!" to warn the' unconscious maid,
And with his own good sword bore off the hostile blade.

XXX.

Still the stroke fell, and near the graceful head
Her snowy neck received the point, which drew
Some rosy drops, that crimsoned, as they shed,
Her yellow curls with their bespangling dew;
E'en thus gold beams with the blush-rose's hue,
When round it rubies sparkle from the hand
Of some rare artist; trembling at the view,
His wrath the Prince no longer may command,
But on the caitiff falls, and shakes his threatening brand.

XXXI.

The villain flies, and full of rage the knight
Pursues,—as arrows swift, they scour the plains:
Perplexed she stands, and keeps them both in sight
To a great distance, nor to follow deigns,
But quickly her retreating band regains;—
Sometimes she fronts in hostile attitude
The' arrested Franks, now flies, and now disdains
To fly,—fights, flies again, as suits her mood,
Nor can she well be termed pursuer or pursued.

XXXII.

So in the Circus the fierce bull turns back
To gore the baying mastiffs that pursue;
They pause—but still as he resumes his track,
Their ruffian clamours savagely renew.
She, as she fled, above her shoulders threw
Her guardian buckler, like an orbed sun;
So at their sports gymnastic may we view
The fugitive Morescos shielded run,
Dexterous the darted balls on nimble feet to shun.[5]

[5] This simile alludes to the game of Caroselli, introduced into Italy by the Moors.

XXXIII.

Whilst these give chase, and those assaulted fly,
To the town-walls they now approaching drew,
When on the sudden, with a frightful cry,
Back on the Christians came the Pagan crew;
First wheeling far aloof, and then anew
Returning nigh, with circumventing skill
They on the wings and rear tempestuous flew;
Whilst undisguised Argantes down the hill
Moved to assail the front, and shouted wild and shrill.

XXXIV.

Before his troop the fierce Avenger passed,
All eager first to pounce upon the prey;
Over and over, at one charge he cast
The horse and rider that first crossed his way;
And ere to shivers flew his lance, there lay
Whole heaps of such in his encumbered track;
Then from its scabbard leaps his sword, and aye
Whom it but fully reaches to attack,
It either kills, or wounds, or beats affrighted back.

XXXV.

In rivalry of him Clorinda slew
Ardelio brave, of years now most mature,
But though by age untamed, and fenced by two
Bold sons, he was not from her sword secure:
For a sharp wound which he could ill endure,
First from the sire removed his eldest pride,
Unblest Alcander; and his trust, the sure
Young Polypherne, assistant at his side,
For his own menaced life but barely could provide.

XXXVI.

But Tancred, finding that he vainly chased
The ruffian, who a swifter steed displayed,
Looked back and saw how far intemperate haste
Hurried the valour of his bold brigade;
Hemmed in he saw it, to the sword betrayed,
And spurring back, to the corrected rein,
His gallant steed, came quickly to their aid;
Nor he alone, but that Adventurous train,
Who every risk of war unshrinkingly sustain.

XXXVII.

Dudon's choice phalanx to the rescue throng,
The flower of heroes, dragons of the fight;
And noblest, bravest, foremost rushed along,
The gay and versatile Rinaldo, light
As the wild wind; Erminia knew the knight
By his bold port and azure-tincted shield,
Where the bird argent spreads its plumes for flight,[6]
And to the king, who watched him through the field,
Exclaimed, "Lo there the youth to whom all knights must yield!

XXXVIII.

"But few or none in tournament can vie
With him, though yet but into boyhood grown;
Could Europe six such paragons supply,
Salem were not, and Syria were o'erthrown;
The South her strong supremacy would own,
Kingdoms that lie beneath the morning star
Stoop to her rule, and in the burning zone,
Vainly perhaps would Nilus seek afar,
Amid his secret springs, a refuge from the war!

XXXIX.

"Rinaldo is his name; his angry sword
More threats your walls than the most huge machine:
But turn to where I point; yon noble lord,
Glittering in armature of gold and green,
Is gallant Dudon, to whose call convene
The band to which I see your eyes advert,
Adventurers chivalrous,—a warrior keen,
Who high-born, active, and in arms expert,
Greatly transcends in years, nor yields in true desert.

XL.

"That towering figure, sheathed in brown, has birth
From Norway's king, Gernando is his name:
No prouder creature breathes, throughout the earth;
A single foible sullying all his fame.
But lo, urged on for ever by one aim,
Where Edward and his dear Gildippe move!
Their mantles, arms, and ornaments the same,
Argent! in bridal harmony they rove,
Famed both for deeds of arms, and loyalty of love."

6 An eagle *argent* in a field *azure*, the armorial bearings of the House of Este.

XLI.

Whilst thus Erminia communes with the king,
Below, yet deeper carnage dyes the fields;
There Tancred and Rinaldo break the ring,
Dense with conflicting men and serried shields;
Then pour the' Adventurers in, and bravely wields
Each knight the weapon of his sharp disdain;
Argantes' self, the proud Argantes yields;
Beat by Rinaldo backward on the plain
In sudden shock, he scarce his footing can regain:—

XLII.

Nor e'er had he renewed the stern debate,
But the same instant fell Rinaldo's steed,
And from the pressure of its cumbrous weight
The noble youth not easily was freed.
Meanwhile, diffused in flight, with headlong speed,
On to the barbican the Pagans hied;
Argantes and Clorinda sole impede—
Mounds to its wrath—the' irruptions of the tide
That on them bursts behind with such insulting pride.

XLIII.

Last they retire, and the pursuing force
Of battle hold in check, and so restrain,
That those who flee before, screened in their course,
With less of ruin gored the city gain.
Still Dudon, flushed with conquest, gave the rein
To his curvetting horse, that with a bound
Bore down the fierce Tigranes; not in vain
The sharp sword struck; he headless fell to ground,
And, savage e'en in death, superb defiance frowned.

XLIV.

Nought his fine hauberk Algazel avails,
Nought his strong helmet Corbano defends;
Them through the nape and back he so assails,
That through the face and breast the steel protends:
With fell Almanzor next two valiant friends,
Mahmoud and Amurath, his trenchant brand
From pleasant life to Lethe quickly sends;
The valour flashing from his armed hand,
Not e'en Circassia's Duke could unannoyed withstand.

XLV.

He frets within himself, with rage he burns,
Oft stops, wheels round, yet still the field forsakes;
At last so sudden on his foe he turns,
And with a spring like the uncoiling snake's,
At Dudon's side so fierce a thrust he makes,
That deep within, it bathes the griding blade,
And from the Chief all power of motion takes;
He falls; and his shut eyes, with pain o'erweighed,
An adamantine sleep and quietude invade.

XLVI.

Thrice he unclosed them, and the sun's sweet light
Sought to enjoy; thrice on his arm arose,
And thrice fell back; then dark the veil of night
Involved his eyes, which, tired, for ever close.
His limbs relax; from all his members flows
A dead cold sweat; the pulses cease their play,
And sensibly an icy stiffness grows:
Upon the knight now dead, no idle stay
The fierce Argantes makes, but instant hies his way.

XLVII.

Yet, turning as he speeds his cruel eye
On his antagonists, he cries aloud:
"This falchion, streaming with so bright a dye,
Is that which yesterday your Prince bestowed!
Quick! be its quittance to his ear avowed;
Tell him what havoc it has done to-day;
Glad will he be to find a gift so proud,
Brought to its trial, stand the sharp assay;
How I must prize it, think,—how I have used it, say!

XLVIII.

"Tell him, that soon he may expect to see
In his own bowels proof of it more sure;
That if he hastes not to the battle, we
Will drag him from his tented coverture;"
The irritated Franks but ill endure
The brutal message and insulting call;
All pressed to charge him; but he passed secure
Beneath the favour of the guarded wall,
And reached the rest that fled, unhurt, unharmed of all.

XLIX.

Then from the battlements of either tower,
A storm of stones obscured the sleety air,
And arrows, an immitigable shower,
Innumerable archers fulmine there
From the tough bow; the Christians pause,—they dare
No further press, but shrinking from the storm,
Perforce the relics of the Pagans spare;
'Twas then Rinaldo showed his martial form,
Freed from his fallen horse, as Jove's red lightnings warm.

L.

He came, on the barbaric homicide
Slain Dudon's debt with usury to repay,
And to his pausing troops sublimely cried,
"What wait you for? what means this base delay?
Slain is the gallant lord, your Chieftain,—say,
What is it stays you? what is it appals?
Forward this instant, and the town essay!
What! when so great a cause for vengeance calls,
Shall we be held in check by these weak mouldering walls?

LI.

"No! though with adamant each charmed tower
Were flanked, or triply fenced with stubborn steel,
Safe in its pale the' assassin should not cower,
But the full measure of your vengeance feel;
On! on!" and seconding the high appeal
By instant action, to the walls, before
All else he rushes; in his ardent zeal
Scorning with guarded head the shower and roar
Of stones, and shafts, and darts that from the engines pour.

LII.

He shakes his sable plumes, he lifts his face,
So full of fierce resolve, that it enchains
The energies of all who guard the place,—
An icy fear runs thrilling through their veins.
While thus the seized advantage he maintains,
And those to menace seeks, and these to cheer,
In rushes one who his desire restrains;
Godfrey has sent to them the good Sigièr,
Of his discreet commands the' executor severe:

LIII.

Who in his reverenced name commands them back.
And chides a step so rash and so absurd:
"This is no time," he cries, "for the attack;
Godfrey recals you from the risk incurred.
Back! back!" Rinaldo, who the rest had spurred
To the near danger, thus compelled to yield,
Slowly receded, uttering not a word,
But inly chafed, and outwardly revealed
More than one pregnant sign of anger ill concealed.

LIV.

Unharassed of the foe, by due degrees,
The Franks bore off, and full of sorrow paid
The last sad rites and solemn offices
Due to the person of the noble dead;
Borne in their pious arms, his friends conveyed
The sacred weight along,—whilst on the height
Of fair Mount Olivet, the Duke surveyed
The city's strength, appliances, and site;
Rampire, and battled crag, and fastness shaped for fight.

LV.

On two bold hills Jerusalem is seen,
Of size unequal, face to face opposed;
A wide and pleasant valley lies between,
Dividing hill from hill; three sides the coast
Lies craggy, difficult, and high, disposed
In steep acclivities; the fourth is cast
In gentlest undulations, and enclosed
By walls of height insuperable and vast,
That seem to brave the sky, and face the Arctic blast.

LVI.

Cisterns for rain, canals and living fountains
Make glad the thirsting city; but around,
Barren, and bare, and naked are the mountains,
And scarce one solitary flower is found
To blossom near: no sylvans, sun-embrowned,
Shut out the fervid noon; no valley shines
With lapse of lakes, nor falling waters sound;
One forest yet the blue horizon lines,
Black with the baleful shades of cypresses and pines.

LVII.

Here, toward the regions of the orient day,
The stately Jordan leads its happy wave;
There, where the solemn sunset fades away,
A sandy shore Levantine billows lave;
North, with Samaria Bethel stands, which gave
Fires to the Golden Calf, of hell beguiled;
And last, where Auster from his southern cave
Let loose the showery winds and tempests wild,
Bethlehem, whose matron lap received the Heaven-born Child.

LVIII.

Now as the Chief the city's walls espied—
Its strength, its site—and in his wisdom weighed
Where best he could encamp, and on which side
The hostile towers might safest be essayed,
To Aladine divine Erminia said,
Her eager finger pointing to the place;
"That Godfrey is, in purple robes arrayed!
Observe with what a military grace
He moves! august his port, and dignified his pace!

LIX.

"He of a truth was born for empire: yes!
So well he knows to govern and command;
Great as a general, as a knight no less,
Sceptre and sword were fashioned to his hand!
I know not one of all that countless band,
More warlike, or more wise; Raymond the sage,
Perhaps in counsel by his side might stand,
Rinaldo, Tancred equal warfare wage,
These from their sprightlier youth, and Raymond from his age."

LX.

"Him," the king answered, "I remember well:
I saw him at the splendid Court of France,
When envoy there from Egypt, and could tell
How gallantly in joust he bore his lance;
And though his years, which then did scarce advance
Beyond gay boyhood, had begun to grave
No manly lines on his smooth cheek, his glance,
Bold deeds, reflective mind, and semblance brave,
Of loftiest hopes e'en then a certain presage gave.

LXI.

"Too sure, alas!" and here his troubled eyes
He cast to earth, till gathering voice, he said:
"But who is he that as an equal vies
With him, in mantle of resplendent red?
How like in form and visage! e'en his tread
Betrays a strange similitude, though less
I deem his stature:" "That," rejoined the maid,
"Is Baldwin, like in aspect and address,
But brother most in soul and princely nobleness.

LXII.

"Now mark the man near Godfrey, in the guise
Of an adviser; he deserves all praise!
That is Earl Raymond, prudent, close, and wise,
Of reverend tresses white with length of days;
Such politic manœuvres none displays—
Latin or Frank—in battle to o'erwhelm,
Or to deceive; but he that blinds our gaze,
The sunshine playing on his gilded helm,
Is William, the young hope of Britain's distant realm.

LXIII.

"With him is Guelph, in rich estates, high blood,
And thirst for honour equal with the best;
I know him well by his firm attitude,
By his broad shoulders and dilated chest:
But my chief foe, for whom in eager quest
I have so long looked round, I no where see,
Fell Bohemond, the' assassin! he oppressed
My subjects, slew my sire, and left to me
No joy but that of tears, no friends but Heaven and thee!"

LXIV.

Thus commune they; whilst having well surveyed
The City, Bouillon joined his hosted train,
And as he judged that battery and scalade
On all sides else would be assayed in vain,—
Against the Northern Gate, on the near plain
Fixing his standard, he encamps; and thence
His quartered troops extending, till they gain
The Corner Tower, the whole vast field presents
One long continuous scene of equipage and tents.

LXV.

By this extensive circuit the third part
Of the devoted City was embraced;
And though it baffled all his power and art,
(Such was its range) the whole to circumvest,
Yet what he could to obviate and arrest
All partial aids that to the town might flow,
His active genius compassed; he possessed
The heights around, the valley-paths below,
And each strong pass that gave admittance to and fro:

LXVI.

And fortified his Camp, and fenced it well
With bristling palisade and yawning fosse,
Strong to oppose the sallying Infidel,
And all eruptions of a foreign force.
That task accomplished, he would see the corse
Of his slain friend; he reached the fatal tent,
Where, grieving at the' irreparable loss,
The soldiers o'er their lifeless Chieftain bent,
And one wild sob ran round of anguish and lament.

LXVII.

His bosom friends the high bier had adorned
With ceremonial pomp, a solemn show;
And when the Chief appeared amidst them mourned
In louder accents, with a tenderer woe;
But pious Godfrey gave no tear to flow,
Not all serene, nor clouded was his look;
Dumb for awhile, his fixt eyes seemed to grow
To the loved form they contemplate;—he broke
Silence at length, and thus in calm dejection spoke.

LXVIII.

"Tears are not now thy due! from the world's toil,
Gone to assume in heaven the brighter birth;
A winged Angel, from thy mortal coil
Escaped, thy glory lingers yet round earth!
Christ's hallowed warrior living thou went'st forth,
Christ's champion didst thou die; and now, blest Shade,
The crown and palm of righteousness and worth
Thou wear'st, with joys unspeakable repaid,
Feeding thine eyes on things to fancy unportrayed!

LXIX.

"Yes! thou liv'st happy: and if yet we keep
Vigils of grief, and echo groan for groan,
'T is not for thee, but for ourselves we weep,
Whose noblest pillar lies in thee o'erthrown;
But though pale Death (a title we disown)
Of earthly aid has stripped and rendered vain
Our arms, bright legions stand before the throne,
And raised thyself to that selected train,
Still may thy suit for us celestial aids obtain.

LXX.

"And as we saw thee, whilst a mortal, shield
With mortal arms our cause, let us descry
Thy conquering hand for our advantage wield
Heaven's fatal arms, a spirit of the sky!
Hear now the vows we offer up; be nigh,
And in the hour of ultimate distress
Send down immortal succours from on high;
So will we raise to thee for wrought success,
Hymns of triumphal praise, and in our temples bless!"

LXXI.

He ceased: the last bright beams of day were spent,
And eve ascending in the starless air,
Imposed a sweet oblivion on lament,
Rest to each toil, a truce to every care;
But Godfrey still watched, anxious to prepare
The mighty engines, without which he knew
The toil of war would be a brave despair;
Then how to frame their shape, and whence to hew
Materials for the work, perplexed his mind anew.

LXXII.

But when the morn looked forth on Jordan's flood,
The funeral pageant he lamenting led;
An odoriferous ark of cypress wood,
Near a green hill, became Lord Dudon's bed;
The hill adjoined the Camp, and overhead
A lofty palm its verdant foliage flung;
Last, white-robed Priests their anthem o'er the dead,
Slow-moving, hymned, and many a tuneful tongue
Sweet at the solemn close his requiescat sung:

LXXIII.

And here and there the tree's proud branches bore
Ensigns and arms, the banner and the bow,—
Spoils, which in fight more fortunate he tore
Or from the Syrian or the Persian foe;
In midst, his own pierced cuirass they bestow,
His hollow helmet, his inverted spear---
And grave this legend on the trunk below:
"Pilgrim, a champion of the Cross rebere;
And pass this tomb with awe—brave Dudon slumbers here."

LXXIV.

The Duke, when thus his piety had paid
The funeral rites, and shed his duteous tears,
Sent all his skilled mechanics to invade
The forest, guarded by a thousand spears;
Veiled by low hills it stood, the growth of years,—
A Syrian shepherd pointed out the vale,
And thither brought the Camp-artificers
To fabricate the engines doomed to scale
The City's sacred towers, and turn her people pale.

LXXV.

Each cheers on each, and to the general call
Unwonted ravage rends the woods around;
Hewed by the iron's piercing edge, down fall,
And with their leafy honours heap the ground,
Pines, savage ashes, beeches, palms renowned,
Funereal cypresses, the fir-tree high,
Maple, and holm with greens eternal crowned,
And wedded elm to which the vines apply
Their virgin arms, and curl, and shoot into the sky.

LXXVI.

Some fell the yews, some fell the warrior-oaks,
Whose trunks have budded to a thousand springs,
And braved immoveable the thousand shocks
Of Boreas rushing on his wintry wings;
And here the alder nods, the cedar swings
On creaking wheels; some bark the trees, some square;
With shouts and clang of arms the valley rings,—
Sick with the sound, the Nymphs their haunts forswear.
The stork her nest forsakes, the lioness her lair.

CANTO IV.

Stanza lxv.

ARGUMENT.

THE Prince of Darkness in the realms below
His powers assembles, and in grief and rage
From Orcus lets them loose, a war of woe
With all their art against the Franks to wage.
By them incited, Idraote the Sage
Burns with ambition, and in flattering style
Studies Armida's influence to engage;
Urged, she proceeds, to smooth by her sweet smile
His way,—her only arms, wit, beauty, youth, and guile.

I.

WHILST thus in fervent toil the artisan
His warlike engines framed, of largest size,
To storm the city, the grand foe of man
Against the Christians turned his livid eyes;
And seeing them in glad societies,
On the new works successfully engaged,
Bit both his lips for fury, and in sighs
And bellowings, like a wounded bull enraged,
Roared forth his inward grief, and envy unassuaged.

II.

Then, having run through every mode of thought
To work them sharpest ills, he gave command
That all his angels should make swift resort
To his imperial court, a horrid band!
As though it were a trivial thing to stand
(O fool!) the' antagonist of God, and spite
His will divine! unmindful of the hand
That, thundering thro' all space, from heaven's blest height
Hurled him of yore down—down to Tartarus and Night.

III.

Its hoarse alarm the Stygian trumpet sounded
Through the dark dwellings of the damned; the vast
Tartarean caverns tremblingly rebounded,
Blind air rebellowing to the dreary blast:
Hell quaked with all its millions: never cast
The' ethereal skies a discord so profound,
When the red lightning's vivid flash was past;
Nor ever with such tremors rocked the ground,
When in its pregnant womb conflicting fires were bound.

IV.

The Gods of the Abyss in various swarms
From all sides to the yawning portals throng,
Obedient to the signal—frightful forms,
Strange to the sight, unspeakable in song!
Death glares in all their eyes; some prance along
On horny hoofs,—some, formidably fair,
Whose human faces have the viper's tongue,
And hissing snakes for ornamental hair,
Ride forth on dragon folds that lash the lurid air.

V.

There might you hear the Harpy's clangorous brood,
The Python's hiss, the Hydra's wailing yell,
Mad Scylla barking in her greedy mood,
And roaring Polypheme, the pride of hell;
Pale Gorgons, savage Sphinxes, Centaurs fell,
Geryons, Chimeras breathing flakes of fire,
Figures conceptionless, innumerable,
Multiform shapes conjoined in monsters dire,
To the vast halls of Dis in hideous troops aspire.

VI.

They took their stations right and left around
The grisly king; he, cruel of command,
Sate in the midst of them, and sourly frowned,
The huge, rough sceptre waving in his hand.
No Alpine crag, terrifically grand,
No rock at sea in size with him could vie;
Calpe, and Atlas soaring from the sand,
Seemed to his stature little hills, so high
Reared he his horned front in that Tartarean sky.

VII.

A horrid majesty in his fierce face
Struck deeper terror, and increased his pride;
His bloodshot eyeballs were instinct with rays
That like a baleful comet, far and wide,
Their fatal splendour shed on every side;
In rough barbaric grandeur his hoar beard
Flowed to his breast, and like the gaping tide
Of a deep whirlpool his grim mouth appeared,
When he unclosed his jaws, with foaming gore besmeared.

VIII.

His breath was like those sulphurous vapours born
In thunder, stench, and the live meteor's light,
When red Vesuvius showers, by earthquakes torn.
O'er sleeping Naples in the dead of night
Funereal ashes! whilst he spoke, affright
Hushed howling Cerberus, the Hydra's shriek;
Cocytus paused in its lamenting flight;
The abysses trembled; horror chilled each cheek;
And these the words they heard the fallen Archangel speak.

IX.

"Princes of Hell! but worthier far to fill
In Heaven, whence each one sprang, his diamond throne;
Ye, who with me were hurled from the blest hill,
Where brighter than the morning-star we shone,
To range these frightful dungeons! ye have known
The ancient jealousies and fierce disdains
That goaded us to battle; overthrown,
We are judged rebels, and besieged with pains,
Whilst o'er his radiant hosts the happy victor reigns.

X.

"And for the' ethereal air, serene and pure,
The golden sun, and starry spheres, his hate
Has locked us in this bottomless obscure,
Forbidding bold ambition to translate
Our spirits to their first divine estate:
Then, ah the bitter thought! 'tis this which aye
Stings me to madness,—then did he create
The vile worm man, that thing of reptile clay,
To fill our vacant seats in those blue fields of day.

XI.

"Nor this sufficed: to spite us more, he gave
His only Son, his darling to the dead;
He came, he burst hell's gates, and from the grave,
Compassed our kingdoms with audacious tread;
The souls in torment doomed to us, he led
Back to the skies—his richly-ransomed throng;
And, in our teeth, hell's conquered ensigns spread,
Abroad on heaven's bright battlements uphung,
The whilst ten thousand saints their halleluiahs sung.

XII.

"But why renew afflictions so severe,
By numbering up our wrongs, already known!
When, or on what occasion did ye hear
He paused in wrath, and left his works undone?
No more o'er past indignities I run,
But present injuries and future shame—
Shall we pass these? Alas! we cannot shun
The consciousness, that now his envious aim
Is the wide nations round from darkness to reclaim.

XIII.

"What! shall we pass in sloth the days and hours,
Cherish no wrath-born lightnings in our veins,
But leave his principalities and powers
To reap fresh laurels on the Asian plains?
To lead Judea in their servile chains,
And spread his worshipped name from clime to clime?
Sound it in other tongues, in other strains,
And on fresh columns sculpture it sublime,
To teach the future age, and mock almighty Time?

XIV.

"Must then our glorious idols be o'erthrown?
Our altars change to his? our temples nod?
Gold, incense, vows, be paid to him alone,
And Baäl bow before the shrine of God?
In the high Groves where erst we made abode
Must priest, nor charm, nor oracle remain?
And shall the myriad spirits who bestowed
Tribute on us, that tribute now disdain,
And o'er dispeopled realms abandoned Pluto reign?

XV.

"No! for our essences are yet the same,
The same our pride, our prowess, and our power,
As when with sharp steel and engirding flame,
In godlike battle we withstood the flower
Of heaven's archangels: we in evil hour
Were foiled, I grant; but partial chance, not skill
Gave them the victory,—still we scorned to cower;
Victory was theirs, but an unconquered will
Nobly remained to us—it fires our spirits still!

XVI.

"Why longer then delay! arise, take wing,
My hope, my strength, my trusty cohorts, fly;
Plagues and swift ruin on these Christians bring,
Ere reinforced by any fresh ally;
Haste! quench the spreading flame of chivalry,
Ere in its blaze Judea all unites;
Your arts exert, your strong temptations ply;
Enter at will among their armed knights,
Now practise open force, and now use secret sleights.

XVII.

"Let what I will, be fate; give some to rove
In exile, some in battle to be slain;
Let some, abandoned to a lawless love,
Make woman's smiles and frowns their joy and pain,
And brilliant eyes their idols; let some stain
Their swords in civil strife; let some engage
In crimes against their Chief; let murder reign
With treason, rage with murder, hate with rage;
So perish all—priest, king, prince, noble, serf, and sage!"

XVIII.

Ere yet the Anarch closed his fierce harangue,
His rebel angels on swift wings were flown,
Glad to revisit the pure light;—a clang
Of pinions passed, and he was left alone.
As in their deep Eolian grottoes moan
The Spirits of the storm—as forth they sweep,
Or ere the signal of the winds is blown,
With howling sound, high carnival to keep,
And in wild uproar all embroil both land and deep;—

XIX.

So the loosed Fiends o'er valley, wave, and hill,
Spreading their nimble wings, themselves dispersed;
Solicitous to frame, with demon-skill,
New-fancied snares, and urge their arts accursed:
But say, sweet Muse! of various ills, what first
Their malice wrought, and by what agents, say;
Thou know'st it; Fame the tidings has rehearsed,
But in the gloom remote of times grown grey,
Long ere it reach our ear, her weak voice melts away.

XX.

A mighty wizard in Damascus reigned,
Prince Idraotes; who from childhood pored
O'er dark divining volumes, till he gained
The potent knowledge which his soul adored;
But what availed his whole collected hoard
Of signs and charms, if he could not foretel
The war's uncertain issues? his search soared
To heaven—no star, no planet owned the spell,
Nor would one parleying ghost divulge the truth from hell.

XXI.

And yet he thought (blind human wit, how vain
And crooked are thy thoughts!) that Heaven had blessed
The Paynim arms, and surely would ordain
Death to the' unconquered armies of the West;
He judged that Egypt from their grasp would wrest
The palm of war, and from the dazzling game
Depart a winning victor, and impressed
With this delusive hope, resolved to claim
Part in the grand award of conquest, wealth, and fame.

XXII.

But as their prowess drew his high esteem,
The war's vague chances he forbore to dare,
And long revolved how by some deep-laid scheme
The Christian princes he might best ensnare,
And by diminishing their strength, prepare
The path for Egypt; when, with ruin rife,
Her hosts the conquering sword abroad should bear;
His evil angel marked the mental strife,
Made quick the embryo thought, and pushed it into life.

XXIII.

He framed the fraud, the counsel he inspired,
And made his purpose easy to pursue;
He had a niece, whose beauty was admired
Of the whole Orient, paralleled by few,
And to the echo vaunted; one who knew
Each fine discretion, each beguiling art
Of virgin and enchantress; her he drew
To his saloon, and thus to her apart,
In nectarous words made known the wishes of his heart.

XXIV.

"Dear niece! that underneath these locks of gold,
And that fair face, so young yet so divine,
Dost hide a heart, wise, masculine, and bold,
And magic skill transcendent over mine,—
I nurse a mighty project: the design
But needs thy gentle guidance to commend
My hopes to sure success; the thread I twine,
Weave thou the web, the lively colours blend;
What cautious Age begins let dauntless Beauty end.

XXV.

"Go to the hostile camp; weep, tremble, sigh,
Each female charm that lures to love employ;
Let the lips aid the witchcraft of the eye,
Smiles flash through tears, and grief despond in joy:
Now shrink from notice, now with prayers annoy;
In weeping beauty o'er the wise prevail;
Go! storm the' obdurate bosom, win the coy,
In seeming truth clothe fiction's specious tale,
And with deep maiden shame thy bold advances veil.

XXVI.

"First, if thou canst, take Godfrey in the thrall
Of thy sweet looks and amiable address,
Till his soul sickens at the trumpet's call,
And the world's war dissolves in a caress;
But if this feat surpass thy skill, possess
His bravest nobles, and in friendship's guise
Transport them to some boundless wilderness,
Ne'er to return:" he opens his device,
And adds—"All means our faith—our country sanctifies!"

XXVII.

Armida, in her youth and beauty's pride,
Assumed the' adventure, and at close of day,
Eve's vesper star her solitary guide,
Alone, untended, took her secret way.
In clustering locks and feminine array,
Armed with but loveliness and frolic youth,
She trusts to conquer mighty kings, and slay
Embattled hosts; meanwhile false rumours soothe
The light censorious crowd, sagacious of the truth.

XXVIII.

Few days elapsed, ere to her wishful view
The white pavilions of the Latins rise;
The camp she reached,—her wondrous beauty drew
The gaze and admiration of all eyes;
Not less than if some strange star in the skies,
Or blazing comet's more resplendent tire
Appeared; a murmur far before her flies,
And crowds press round, to listen or inquire
Who the fair pilgrim is, and soothe their eyes' desire.

XXIX.

Never did Greece or Italy behold
A form to fancy and to taste so dear!
At times, the white veil dims her locks of gold,
At times, in bright relief they reappear:
So, when the stormy skies begin to clear,
Now through transparent clouds the sunshine gleams;
Now, issuing from its shrine, the gorgeous Sphere
Lights up the leaves, flowers, mountains, vales and streams,
With a diviner day—the spirit of bright beams.

XXX.

New ringlets form the flowing winds amid
The native curls of her resplendent hair;
Her eye is fixed in self-reserve, and hid
Are all Love's treasures with a miser's care;
The Rival Roses upon cheeks more fair
Than morning light, their mingling tints dispose;
But on her lips, from which the amorous air
Of paradise exhales, the crimson rose
Its sole and simple bloom in modest beauty throws.

XXXI.

Crude as the grape unmellowed yet to wine,
Her bosom swells to sight; its virgin breasts,
Smooth, soft, and sweet, like alabaster shine,
Part bare, part hid by her invidious vests;
Their jealous fringe the greedy eye arrests,
But leaves its fond imagination free,
To sport, like doves, in those delicious nests,
And their most shadowed secresies to see;
Peopling with blissful dreams the lively phantasy.

XXXII.

As through pure water or translucent glass
The sunbeam darts, yet leaves the crystal sound,
So through her folded robes unruffling pass
The thoughts, to wander on forbidden ground:
There daring Fancy takes her fairy round,
Such wondrous beauties singly to admire;
Which, in a pleasing fit of transport bound,
She after paints and whispers to Desire,
And with her charming tale foments the' excited fire.

XXXIII.

Praised and admired Armida passed amid
The wishful multitudes, nor seemed to spy,
Though well she saw the interest raised, but hid
In her deep heart the smile that to her eye
Darted in prescience of the conquests nigh:
Whilst in the mute suspense of troubled pride
She sought with look solicitous, yet shy,
For her uncertain feet an ushering guide
To the famed Captain's tent, young Eustace pressed her side

XXXIV.

As the winged insect to the lamp, so he
Flew to the splendour of her angel face,
Too much indulgent of his wish to see
Those eyes which shame and modesty abase;
And, drawn within the fascinating blaze,
Gathering, like kindled flax, pernicious fire
From its resplendence, stupid for a space
He stood—till the bold blood of blithe desire
Did to his faltering tongue these few wild words inspire.

XXXV.

"O Lady! if thy rank the name allow,
If shapes celestial answer to the call—
For never thus did partial Heaven endow
With its own light a daughter of the Fall,—
Say on what errand, from what happy hall,
Seek'st thou our camp? and if indeed we greet
In thee one of the tribes angelical,
Cause us to know—that we, as were most meet,
May bend to thee unblamed, and kiss thy saintly feet."

XXXVI.

"Nay," she replied, "thy praises shame a worth
Too poor to warrant such a bold belief;
Thou see'st before thee one of mortal birth,
Dead to all joy, and but alive to grief;
My harsh misfortunes urge me to your Chief,—
A foreign virgin in a timeless flight;
To him I speed for safety and relief,
Trusting that he will reassert my right:
So far resounds his fame, for mercy and for might.

XXXVII.

"But, if indulgent courtesy be thine,
To pious Godfrey give me strait access!"
"Yes, lovely pilgrim," he replied, "be mine
The task to guide thee in thy young distress:
Nor is my interest with our Chieftain less
Than what a brother may presume to vaunt;
Thy suit shall not be wanting in success;
Whate'er his sceptre or my sword can grant,
Shall in thy power be placed, to punish or supplant."

XXXVIII.

He ceased, and brought her where, from the rude crowd
Apart, with captains and heroic peers,
Duke Godfrey sate; she reverently bowed,
A sweet shame mantling o'er her cheek, and tears
Stifling her speech: he reassured her fears,
Chid back the blush so beautifully bright,
Till, sweeter than the music of the spheres,
Their captive senses chaining in delight,
Her siren voice broke forth, and all were mute as Night.

XXXIX.

"Unconquered Prince!" she said, "whose name supreme
Flies through the world on such a radiant plume,
That kings and nations conquered by thee, deem
Their deed of vassalage a glorious doom,—
Well known thy valour shines, thy virtues bloom;
And whilst thy foes revere them and admire,
They, on their part, invite us to assume
The confidence we need, and to desire
Aid at thy hands, and aid requested to acquire.

XL.

"Thus I, though nurtured in the faith you hate,
And strive to cancel from the world's wide page,
Hope to regain by thee my lost estate,
My sceptre, and ancestral heritage:
Others, oppressed by foreign force, engage
The succours of their kindred; I, alas!
Defrauded of their pity at an age
Which claims it most, against my kindred, pass,
And hostile arms invoke — the ghost of what I was!

XLI.

"To thee I call, on thee depend, for thou
Alone canst conquer back mine ancient crown;
Nor shouldst thou be less prompt to raise the low
Than on the proud to call destruction down;
Lovelier is Mercy's smile than Valour's frown,
A suppliant cherished than a foe undone:
And 'twere less glorious to thy just renown,
Whatever hazards in the task were run,
To lay whole realms in dust than thus relumine one.

XLII.

"But if our varying faiths—my Gentile creed—
Move thee to disregard my humble prayer,
Let my sure faith in thine indulgence plead
My cause, nor prove an illusory snare;
Lo! before universal Jove I swear—
God over all, from whom all empire flows,—
A juster quarrel never claimed thy care;
But listen! frauds, conspiracies, and foes,
Of these my story treats, a tale of many woes!

XLIII.

"The daughter I of Arbilan, who reigned
In fair Damascus—less by birth made great
Than merit; Queen Cariclea he obtained
In marriage, and with her possessed the state:
Her death, alas! did almost antedate
My worthless life! I issued from the womb
As she expired; the self-same hour of fate,
(Oh birth too dearly bought! oh ill-starred doom!)
Me to the cradle gave, my mother to the tomb.

XLIV.

"Five summer-suns had scarcely spent their fire,
Since Death's pale Angel called her to the skies,
Than, yielding to the lot of all, my sire
Rejoined her sainted shade in Paradise.
He left his brother, by his last devise,
Sole regent of the kingdom and of me;
Thinking that if the natural pieties
In mortal breast had mansion, they must be
Locked in his kindred heart with virtue's strictest key.

XLV.

"Thus then he played the tutor to my youth,
And with such show of kindness, that each wind
Voiced far and near his uncorrupted truth,
Paternal love, and bounty unconfined:
Whether the guilty movements of his mind
Beneath a flattering face he thought to hide,
Or that he then sincerely was inclined
To make me happy, as the destined bride
Of his ungracious son—'twere idle to decide.

XLVI.

"I grew in years, and with me grew his son;
But to no brave accomplishments, no store
Of sciences or arts could he be won,
He hated knightly deeds and princely lore:
Beneath a hideous countenance he bore
A baser soul, whilst pride and avarice
His heart pervaded to its inmost core;
Savage in manners, slave to drink and dice,
None but himself could be his paragon in vice.

XLVII.

"And now it was that my kind guardian strove
To wed me with this ill-assorted thing,
A goodly gallant for a lady's love,
To charm as bridegroom, and to reign as king!
Rhetoric he used—he used address to bring
The ardent hopes with which his fancy swelled
To their vowed end, but never could he wring
From me the fatal promise,—I rebelled,
And all his golden lures disdainfully repelled.

XLVIII.

"At last he left me with a gloomy face,
His elvish heart transpicuous in his look;
Too well my future story could I trace
In the dire leaves of that prophetic book!
Thenceforth each night alarming visions shook
My slumbers,—in my ears strange outcries shrilled,
And phantoms frowned on me; my spirit took
The ghastly impress of their forms, and thrilled
With dread forebodings, since—how fatally fulfilled!

XLIX.

"And oft my mother's piteous ghost appeared;
Ah! how unlike her smiling face portrayed
In picture, loving, lovely, and endeared,
Now all illusion, and a pallid shade!
'Fly! oh my child, fly! fly!' the figure said,
'Instant death threatens thee, and swift as Light
Will the stroke fall;—the traitor's toils are laid;—
The poison in its gay glass sparkles bright:'
This said, it glided by, and melted into night.

L.

"But what, alas! availed it that my heart
Received this presage of the perils near,
When, unresolved to act the counselled part,
My sex and tender age gave way to fear!
To rove through deserts, woods, and mountains drear
In willing exile,—undefenced to go
From my paternal realm seemed more severe
Than to yield up the struggle to my foe,
And there to close mine eyes where first they woke in woe.

LI.

"I dreaded death; yet, (will it be believed?)
With death at hand, I durst not flee away;
I feared e'en lest my fear should be perceived,
And thus accelerate the fatal day:
Thus restless, thus disturbed, without one ray
Of comfort, I dragged on my wretched life,
In a perpetual fever of dismay;
Like the doomed victim, who, in thought's last strife,
Feels, ere the' assassin stabs, the' anticipated knife.

LII.

"But, whether my good Genius ruled, or Fate
Preserved me yet for days of deeper gloom,
One of the noblest ministers of state,
Whose youth my sire had fostered, sought my room;
In brief disclosing that the hour of doom,
Fixed by the fiend, was now upon the wing;
That he himself had promised to assume
The murderous office, and the poison wring,
That night, in the sherbet my page was wont to bring.

LIII.

"Flight, he assured me, was my sole resource
In this my crisis of despair, and prayed
That since bereft of every other force,
I would accept his own effective aid:
His counsels, full of comfort, soon persuade
My undetermined spirit; to the wind
I gave my fears, and only now delayed
Till eve's grey veil the tell-tale light should blind,
To leave all that I loved and hated, far behind.

LIV.

"Night fell; an ebon darkness, more obscure
Than usual, its kind shadows round us spread,
When with two favourite maids I passed secure
The guarded palace, joined my guide, and fled:
But through the trembling tears I ceaseless shed,
Long looked I back on the receding towers,
Insatiate with the sight; all objects fed
My sorrow; each one spoke of happier hours,
The hills, the lamp-lit mosques, and hallowed cypress-bowers.

LV.

"To them my looks, my thoughts, my sighs were given,
As on I speeded, malcontent though free;
I fared like an unanchored pinnace driven
From its loved port by whirlwinds far to sea:
All the long night and following day we flee,
By paths no human foot had ever pressed;
Till on the confines of my realm we see
Its last baronial seat,—there, tired, we rest,
Just as the sun's slow orb forsook the fulgent west.

LVI.

"It was the castle of the generous knight,
Arontes, who had made my life his care;
But when the baffled traitor by our flight
Perceived I had escaped the mortal snare,
His rage flamed forth against us both; and ere
I could arraign him, intricate in ill,
Gathering a fresh presumption from despair,
He charged on us his own all-evil will,—
The selfsame crime which he was studious to fulfil.

LVII.

"He said I had the false Arontes bribed
To mix destroying poisons in his bowl,
Impatient of the maxims he prescribed
To curb my lust, that free from all control
I might pursue the bias of my soul,
And with voluptuous blandishments commend
My beauty to a thousand youths:—Skies! roll
Your thunders, let avenging fires descend,
Ere I thy sacred laws blest Chastity, offend!

LVIII.

"That avarice and ambition, pride and pique
Urge him to shed my guiltless blood, must claim
Grief and alarm; but that the wretch should seek
To fix dishonour on my spotless name,
Goes to my heart: he, fearing now the flame
Of popular rage, with smooth-tongued eloquence,
Forges a thousand falsehoods to my shame;
So that the city fluctuates in suspense
Betwixt the guilt of both, nor arms in my defence.

LIX.

"Yea, though he sits on mine authentic throne,
Though my tiara sparkles on his brow,
Dominion spurs him but more keenly on
To work me farther injury, shame, and woe:
With fire and sword he threatens to o'erthrow
Arontes in his fortress, if in chains
He yield not, and on me denounces now
Not merely war, but stripes and fearful pains,
Whilst flows one drop of blood in my rebellious veins.

LX.

"This—under colour of a lively zeal
To purge away the stains of my disgrace,
And to its ancient purity anneal
The golden sceptre which my crimes debase!
But the true motive is a wish to place
His claims beyond dispute: whilst I remain
Heir to the crown, he fears no plea can grace
His kingly usurpation, so is fain
To build upon my death the basis of his reign.

LXI.

"And e'en such end awaits his fell desire;
He must enjoy what he is fixt to gain,
And in my heart's blood quench the boundless ire
Which all my tears were powerless to restrain,
If thou, alas, my suppliant prayer disdain!
To thee—a wretched girl, weak, innocent,
Orphaned—I fly; must my sad tears in vain
Fall on thy holy robes? relent! relent!
Oh, by the knees I grasp, forbid his fierce intent!

LXII.

"By these thy feet, that on the proud and strong
Triumphantly have trod; by thy right hand;
By thy past victories, a choral throng!
And by the temples of this sacred land,
Freed by the sword, or to be freed,—withstand,
Thou only canst, his merciless decree;
My crown, my life preserve, secure, command,
Merciful Sire! but vain is mercy's plea,
If first religious right and justice move not thee.

LXIII.

"Beloved of Heaven! thou destined to desire
That which is just, and thy desires achieve,
Save me! my kingdom thou wilt thus acquire,
Which I in fief shall thankfully receive;
Let ten of these heroic champions leave
The camp beneath my conduct; their renown,
Spread through the city, will my cause retrieve,
Will win my faithful people to strike down
With ease the man of crime, and repossess my crown.

LXIV.

"Yea, more: a Noble to whose keeping falls
A secret gate, has promised me access,
At dead of night, to my paternal halls;
But some small aid he counselled me to press:
The least, the least thou grantest to redress
The grievances I suffer, will inflame
His hopes with surer prospects of success,
Than if from other kings whole squadrons came,
So high he ranks thy flag, so high thy simple name!"

LXV.

She ceased; but still her mute imploring eye
Spoke eloquence beyond the reach of prayer;
Doubtful alike to grant as to deny,
A thousand various thoughts, absorbed in care,
Godfrey revolved; he feared some Gentile snare
Couched in her tears, some ambuscade of art;
He knew who kept not faith with God, would dare
Break league with man; still pity pleads her part,
Pity—which never sleeps within a noble heart.

LXVI.

His native ruth inspires the wish that she
Deserved the grace; and policy on ruth
Succeeding, whispers it were wise to free,
And fix in rich Damascus one whose truth,
Enforced by the dependency of youth,
May much avail him, with her feudal arms,
The course of his sublime designs to smooth,—
To minister supplies against the' alarms
Of Egypt's mustered tribes and tributary swarms.

LXVII.

Whilst thus from wavering thought to thought he flies,
Revolves, and re-revolves, the eager maid
Fixed on his downcast face her pleading eyes,
And its least workings breathlessly surveyed;
And when his answer longer was delayed
Than she had hoped, she trembled, drooped, and sighed;
Her quivering lips the heart's alarm betrayed;
Pale grew her face: at length the Prince replied,
And in these courteous words mildly her suit denied.

LXVIII.

"If God's own quarrel had not claimed these swords,
Now oath-bound to his cause, thy hopes might rest
Thereon in perfect trust,—not pitying words,
But valid actions had thy wrongs redressed;
But whilst his heritage is thus oppressed
Beneath the harsh rod of a tyrant king,
How can we grant, fair Lady, thy request?
Divided hosts declining fortunes bring,
And check the flowing tide of victory in its spring.

LXIX.

"But this I promise,—firmly may'st thou trust
The word I pledge, and live secure from fear,—
If e'er we conquer from a yoke unjust
These towers, to Heaven and piety so dear,
To pity's voice I will incline mine ear,
Thee on thy lost throne to exalt; but now,
No pitying sympathies must interfere
To cancel what to the Most High we owe,
And for a mortal's sake dissolve our solemn vow."

LXX.

At this the mournful Princess drooped her head,
And stirless stood, as Niobe of yore;
Then raised her eyes, impearled, to heaven, and said,
Whilst all the woman at their founts ran o'er—
"Lost! lost! O skies! O stars! what evils more
Do ye prescribe? did ever one fulfil
A doom so harsh, so merciless before!
Woe's me! all natures change; the world grows chill;
I only vary not, immutable in ill!

LXXI.

"Now farewell hope! now welcome misery!
All prayer in human breasts has lost its force;
Am I to hope the tears that touched not thee
Will move the barbarous tyrant with remorse?—
Yet, though denied this pitiful resource,
With no reproach thy rigour shall be paid;
It is my Genius I accuse—the source
Of all my ills,—my Genius, who has made
Godfrey's a ruthless heart,—'t is him that I upbraid.

LXXII.

"Not to thee, gracious Chieftain! not to thee
Lay I this crime, but to imperious Fate;
Oh, that her active tyranny would free
My weary spirit from a world I hate!
Was 't not enough, stern Power, to dedicate
Mother and sire e'en in their morn of life
To the dark grave, that from my high estate
Thou hast now tossed me on this sea of strife,
And given thy victim bound and blinded to the knife!

LXXIII.

"Now holy sanctitude and maiden shame
Urge me to go, but whither shall I fly?
There is no refuge for a blighted name;
Earth holds no spot beneath the boundless sky
So secret, but the tyrant's active eye
Will find it, and transpierce me; but—I go;
The Angel' of Death approaching I descry;
Nought now is left but to forestal his blow;
None but Armida's arm shall lay Armida low!"

LXXIV.

She ceased: a generous and majestic scorn
Fired all her features to a rose-like red,
And then she made as she would have withdrawn,
With grief and anger in her farewell tread:
Her eyes, 'twixt sorrow and resentment, shed
Tears thick as summer's heat-drops—tears, that shine,
With the sun's golden rays athwart them spread,
Like falling pearls, like crystals argentine,
Or sparkling opal-drops from some far Indian mine.

LXXV.

Her fresh cheeks, sprinkled with those living showers,
Which to her vesture's hem, down gliding, cling,
Appear like snowy and vermilion flowers
Humid with May-dews, when romantic Spring,
In shadow of the green leaves whispering,
Spreads their closed bosoms to the amorous air;
Flowers, to which sweet Aurora oft takes wing,
Which with gay hand she culls with such fond care
In morn's melodious prime, to bind her vagrant hair.

LXXVI.

But the clear drops that, thick as stars of night,
On those fair cheeks and on that heaving breast
So shine, have all the' effect of fire, and light
A secret flame in each beholder's breast:
O Love! the marvellous rod by thee possessed,
For ever powerful over Nature, draws
Lightning from tears, and gives to grief a zest
Beyond the bliss of smiles; but nature's laws
Its magic far transcends, in this thy darling's cause.

LXXVII.

Her feigned laments from roughest warriors call
Sincerest tears;—their hearts to her incline;
Each is afflicted at her grief, and all
At Godfrey's speech thus whisperingly repine:
"Surely he made the vext sea-roaring brine
His nursing cradle, and wild wolves that rave
On the chill crags of some rude Apennine,
Gave his youth suck: oh, cruel as the grave,
Who could view charms like hers, and not consent to save!"

LXXVIII.

But Eustace, in whose young and generous blood
Pity and love flowed strongest, whilst the rest
But murmured and were silent, forward stood,
And dauntlessly his brother thus addressed:
"My Lord! far too inflexibly thy breast
Keeps to the firmness of its first design,
If to the common voice which would obtest
Thy clemency, thou dost not now incline;
Reverent of mercy's claims and quality divine.

LXXIX.

"Think not I urge the princedoms and the powers
Who rank dependent tribes beneath their care,
To turn their arms from these assieged towers,
And the first duties of the camp forswear;
But, warriors of adventure, we, who bear
Nor feudal flag nor delegated trust,
Who act without restriction, well may spare
At thy wise choice, and in a cause most just,
Ten guardian knights to one so helpless, so august.

LXXX.

"Know, he assists the cause of God, who toils
The rights of outraged virgins to maintain;
And precious in his sight must be the spoils
Which freemen hang in Freedom's holy fane,
The glorious trophies of a tyrant slain:
Though then no interest counselled to the deed,
Duty would urge, and Knighthood would constrain
Me to assist the damsel in her need,
And without scruple go, where'er her voice may lead.

LXXXI.

"Oh, by yon bright sun, tell it not in France!
Publish it not where courtesy is dear!
That of our nobles none would break a lance
In Beauty's quarrel, let not Europe hear!
Henceforth, my lord, sword, corslet, helm, and spear,
I toss aside, and bid farewell to fame;
No generous steed shall bear me in career
With swordless chiefs, where Chivalry weds Shame,—
I will no longer bear the knight's degraded name!"

LXXXII.

Thus spoke the youth, and all his Order there
Applausive murmured in loud unison;
Praised his good counsel, and with urgent prayer
Closed round their Captain on his ducal throne.
"I yield," at length he said, "but yield alone
To the desire of numbers, since the plea
Is one my private judgment would disown;
Grant we her boon, if such your pleasure be;
But know the' advice is yours, it not proceeds from me:

LXXXIII.

"And, far as Godfrey's counsel can persuade,
Temper your sympathies, be closely wise:"
He said no more, it was enough,—they paid
The kind concession with delighted cries.
What cannot Beauty, when her pleading eyes
From their deep fountains shower down tears of pain,
And to her amorous tongue sweet speeches rise?
From her divine lips glides a golden chain,
That wins to her dear will who most those tears disdain.[7]

LXXXIV.

Eustace recalled her, took her passive hand,
And said, "Now cease, dear Lady, to repine;
The utmost succours that thy fears demand,
(Weep not) shall all, and speedily be thine:"
Then the dark aspect of her face grew fine,—
With her white veil she wiped the tears away,
And gave a smile so brilliant and benign,
You would have thought the' enamoured God of Day
In sunshine kissed the lips whose lustre shamed his ray.

LXXXV.

And in her sweet voice and pathetic tone,
She gave them thanks for their exceeding grace;
Saying it should to the wide world be known,
And ever and for ever have a place
Within her grateful heart: her working face,
And gestures with impassioned meanings fraught,
Told what the tongue was powerless to express;
Thus masking in false smiles the end she sought,
Her varied web of guile she unsuspected wrought.

[7] The ancients feigned that many chains of gold proceeded from the tongue of Hercules, wherewith the ears of barbaric nations were bound. The fable was probably designed to show the humanizing spirit of eloquence.

LXXXVI.

Who but Armida now exults to see
How fortune and kind fate the fraud befriend?
Who o'er each dark suggestion broods, but she,
To bring the plot to a successful end?
With beauty and sweet flatteries to transcend
Whate'er Medea's witchcraft e'er designed,
Or Circe's incantations wrought,—to blend
Mischief with mirth, and the most watchful mind
As in Elysian sleep with siren songs to bind?

LXXXVII.

All arts the' enchantress practised to beguile
Some new admirer in her well-spread snare;
Nor used with all, nor always the same wile,
But shaped to every taste her grace and air;
Here cloistered is her eye's dark pupil, there
In full voluptuous languishment is rolled;
Now these her kindness, those her anger bear,
Spurred on or checked by bearing frank or cold,
As she perceived her slave was scrupulous or bold.

LXXXVIII.

If she marked some too bashful to advance,
Sick if unnoticed, diffident if seen,
Forth flew her radiant smile, her thrilling glance,
Sunny as summer and as eve serene:
Thus reassured, their dying hopes grow keen;
The faint belief, the languishing desire
Reviving brighten in their eager mien;
Those looks a thousand amorous thoughts inspire,
And Fear's pale frost-work melts in Fancy's lively fire.

LXXXIX.

If some make bold to press her virgin palm,
Too rashly building on her former cheer,
She grows a miser of her eye's mild charm,
Spares her fond smile, and frowns them into fear;
But through the wrath that fires her front austere,
And ruffles her sweet cheek, they may discern
Rays of forgiving pity reappear;
Thus do they droop, but not despair, and yearn
Towards her in deepest love when she appears most stern.

XC.

Sometimes in lonely places she dissembled
Deep grief—the voice, the action, and the tread;
And oft when in her eye the loose tear trembled,
Crushed, or reclaimed it to the fountain-head.
Soon as those tragic gestures were ared,
A thousand striplings, vanquished by her art,
Would come and weep around her: Envy fed
Their frenzy; and Love, tempering his keen dart
In Pity's scalding tears, shot torture through the heart.

XCI.

Anon she starts from her abstraction, wakes
With hope's fresh whispers to her spirit; seeks
Her many lovers, talks to them, and shakes
The bright locks on her brow for joy, that speaks
Life to her lips, and to her glowing cheeks
New smiles; her eyes then sparkle as in scorn
Of their late griefs,—as when Apollo streaks
With fire the opening eyelids of the morn,
And every darkening cloud to distance has withdrawn.

XCII.

But whilst she sweetly speaks and sweetly smiles,
And with this twofold sweetness lulls the sense,
She from its blissful cage well-nigh exiles
The soul, unused to rapture so intense;
Ah cruel Love! whether thy hand dispense,
Wreathed with the cypress or the lotos-leaf,
Thy gall or nectar-cup, its quintessence
Maddens with ecstasy, or blights with grief;
Fatal thy sickness is, and fatal thy relief.

XCIII.

Through all these shifting tempers whilst each knight
Fluctuates disturbed, uncertain of her choice,
Through fire and frost, smiles, tears, fear, hope, delight,
The beauteous witch his agony enjoys:
If any e'er presumes with trembling voice
To tell his secret pain, her guilefulness
The glorious vision of his soul destroys;
She nor perceives his meaning, nor can guess,—
The very fool of Love and frank unconsciousness.

XCIV.

Or, casting down to ground her bashful eyes,
The blush of honour o'er her face she throws,
So that the alabaster white, which lies
In sweet confusion underneath the rose
That her celestial cheek irradiates, glows
Like the rich crimson on Aurora's face,
When from the Orient first her form she shows;
And the red flush of anger keeping pace
With shame, combines to shed round shame a sweeter grace.

XCV.

But if she one perceives resolved to' avow
His warm desire, she stops her charmed ears;
Now shuns his converse, grants an audience now,
Then flies, returns, smiles, frowns, and disappears:
Thus in a war of wishes, sighs, and tears,
In vain pursuit he wastes his life away;
And with deluding hopes, afflicting fears,
Fares like the hunter who at dying day
Has lost in pathless woods all traces of his prey.

XCVI.

These were the arts by which Armida took
A thousand spirits captive to her sleight,
Or rather, these the arms, with which she strook,
And made them bondslaves in their own despite.
What marvel elder Love subdued the might
Of Theseus fierce, and Hercules the strong;
When those who drew the sword in Jesu's right,
Soothed by a siren's smile,—a siren's song,
Wore his enfeebling chains, and gloried in the wrong!

CANTO V

Stanza lxxiii.

ARGUMENT.

GERNANDO scorns Rinaldo should aspire
To the command which he himself would fain
Receive; and, urged by jealousy and ire,
Insults the youth, and is in duel slain:
The slayer lingers not till gyve or chain
Binds his free limbs, but into exile flees;
Content, Armida with a splendid train
Departs, whilst Godfrey from the navied seas
Hears news of sharp concern, that leaves him ill at ease.

I.

WHILST thus the' insidious beauty, day by day,
Lured to her love the Nobles, and beside
The promised number, thought to charm away,
At stealth, fresh vassals to her power and pride,
Godfrey revolved to whom he should confide
Her dubious restoration, through the host
Casting his thoughts; nor could at first decide,—
As all the' Adventurers wished the pleasing post,
And each had bravery, rank, or excellence to boast.

II.

But he at last adopts the wise resolve,
To urge them first a Leader to elect
In Dudon's room, and after to devolve
On him the charge to single or reject
Those who aspire the Damsel to protect;
Thus, none, aggrieved, his partial choice could blame;
Whilst he himself would show supreme respect—
A tribute their achievements justly claim—
To that illustrious band, the glorified of fame.

III.

To him he called them then, and thus addressed:
"Knights! you have heard our sentiments, which were
Not to refuse the Syrian maid's request,
But our intended succours to defer
To a maturer season; I recur
To the same charge,—your judgment yet is free
To follow my proposal; in the stir
Of this unstable world, how oft we see
That 'tis true wisdom's part to change her own decree.

IV.

"But yet, if still you deem it base to shun
The risk, if still your generous hearts disdain
My wary counsels as the fears of one
Too coldly scrupulous,—your own retain;
Go! ne'er shall it be said that I constrain
Reluctant minds, revoke a gift once given,
Or bind your wishes with a forceful chain;
No! gentle be my rule, and gracious, even
As the mild starlight dews and influences of heaven.

V.

"Proceed or stay then at your own free will;
To your discretion I the choice confide;
But first by suffrage fix on one to fill
Slain Dudon's post, your armed array to guide;
He on your high pretensions shall decide,
But choose not more than ten: to me you gave
Powers paramount, to royalty allied;
This my prerogative I cannot waive;
No! for a powerless Chief is but a glorious slave."

VI.

Thus Godfrey spake; and to his word of grace
By joint consent young Eustace made reply:
"As that deliberate judgment is thy praise
Which looks afar into futurity,
So strength of heart and hand, a courage high,
Prompt the first risks of enterprise to face,
Are asked of us, the Lights of Chivalry;
And that ripe tardiness, which in the case
Of some would prudent be, in us would prove most base.

VII

"Then, since the hazard is so far outweighed
By the advantage, let them straight proceed,
The chosen ten, in wronged Armida's aid,
And boldly dare the meritorious deed."
With this adorned pretence he strives to lead
Opinion blinded to his fervent flame,
By show of knightly zeal; the others read
His secret passion and dissembled aim,
Favour the fond deceit, and counterfeit the same.

VIII.

But amorous Eustace, whensoe'er he eyed
Rinaldo's excellences, as mental grace
More winningly attracts when beautified
By a brave figure and a handsome face,
Wished him away; and shrewdness, keeping pace
With anxious jealousy's increasing smart,
Urged him at length his rival to displace,
By deep address; whence, drawing him apart,
He thus his proem tuned with all the flatterer's art.

IX.

"Oh, of great father greater son! O thou,
The young Achilles of this glorious land!
What Chevalier shall lead to conquest now
The gallant warriors of our matchless band?
I, who to noble Dudon's mild command
Could scarcely stoop, who only bent the knee
In reverence of his silver locks, who stand
So near our Chief in kindred and degree,
To whom should I submit? to none, if not to thee.

X.

"Thee! who art equal to the best in birth,
Whose splendid merits cast a shade on mine;
Not e'en would Godfrey scorn to own his worth
In the stern proof of battle, less than thine!
Thee for our Chief I claim then, if to shine
The bold asserter of this lady's right
Be not thy wish; and ne'er canst thou design
To challenge praise achieved by secret sleight,
Or round thy brows to bind the laurels reaped by night.

XI.

"Here may'st thou feats accomplish, that will hand
Thy name, embalmed by some celestial Muse,
To long posterity; the chief command
Will I procure (away with vain excuse!)
From the assenting Knights, who cannot choose
But sanction what my praise shall recommend,
If, when elected, thou wilt not refuse
The favour to thine undecided friend,
At will to war with thee, or with Armida wend."

XII.

He spake not this without a blush that sped
Its deep confusion to the guilty eyes;
His glowing secret well Rinaldo read,
And archly smiled at the ill-dressed disguise:
But he was studious of a loftier prize,
And if a chance-shaft from Armida's bow
Grazed him, its challenge he could half despise;
He neither in a rival feared a foe,
Nor cared for love the chase of glory to forego.

XIII.

But deeply sculptured in his thoughts sublime
Memory of Dudon's bitter death he kept,
And deemed it a disparagement and crime
That yet Argantes lived, and vengeance slept;
Then to hear Eustace urge him to accept
The proffered honour, made his heart rejoice;
And whilst into his ear the music crept
Of praise, his spirit echoed the sweet voice,
Whispering, his early worth deserved the flattering choice.

XIV.

Whence frankly he replied: "The first degree
I wish to merit rather than acquire,
And if by worth sublimed, the dignity
Of rule I need not envy, nor desire;
But since to this invited to aspire,
Since worthy of the noble trust I seem,
I'll not decline the' acceptance you require;
And of this perfect proof of pure esteem,
Dear to a warrior's pride, most gratefully I deem.

XV.

"Amidst the' elected champions, thou, besure,
Shalt rank, if I obtain the vacant post:"
Eustace, this heard, departed to secure,
Apt to his wish, the homage of the host:
But prince Gernando to himself proposed
The prize; for though Armida had not failed
To' engage his thoughts, an innate pride opposed
Her power, and ladye-love with him prevailed
Less than the lust of rule, which most his heart assailed.

XVI.

He from the blood of royal Norway springs,
To whom unnumbered thanes in homage crowd;
A long succession of ancestral kings,
Of coronets and sceptres, made him proud:
To grander Gods Rinaldo's spirit bowed,—
Of his own actions haughtier than the bright
Blue scutcheon of his fathers,—self-endowed;
Yet full five hundred years, as heralds write,
Had these stood famed in peace, and unsubdued in fight.

XVII.

But the barbaric Peer, who all things weighed
By gold, and rank, and amplitude of state,
Whose fancy cast all excellence in shade
That crowns and stars did not illuminate,
Could not endure that any should debate—
Much less Rinaldo—the command with him;
To such excess did anger, scorn, and hate
Transport him, Reason's guiding light grew dim,
And Passion's mustering storm distended every limb.

XVIII.

So that of Hell's foul sprites the most malign,
Who saw unwatched the opening avenue,
Crept to his heart with still coils serpentine,
And at the helm of thought reclining, blew
To flame the sparks of hatred, till they grew
Hot for revenge; yet still he piqued, still stung
His angry soul to agony anew;
The whilst, as warbled by a siren's tongue,
Clear through his haughty heart this flattering prelude rung.

XIX.

"What! were his antique chiefs lords paramount
Of earth, that thus with thee Rinaldo vies?
Since he will mate with thee, let him recount
His governed millions and subdued allies;
Let him bring forth his crowns, and equalize
His sceptred ghosts with thy live kings; can one,
The owner of a few poor seignories,
Born beneath Italy's inglorious sun,
Dare to aspire so high?—what frenzy goads him on?

XX.

"But, win or lose, he reaped a victor's bays
When first he thought thy title to transcend;
The world will say, (to him the highest praise,)
'Lo, with Gernando this man dared contend!'
The station filled by thy departed friend
Glory and splendour round thy path may shower,
But not less honour thou to that wilt lend,—
The prize lost half its value from the hour
When he desired it too, and sought to mate thy power.

XXI.

"And if the soul, when left this breathing frame,
To our affairs its conscious thoughts apply,
Think with how brave a wrath the' ambitious aim
Fires good old Dudon in the radiant sky,
When on this forward Page he casts his eye,
And sees his pride so far the dues subvert
Of reverend age, as with himself to vie;
And, whilst but yet a child and unexpert,
Stand for a public post of such sublime desert.

XXII.

"Yea, this he hopes, this he attempts, and bears
Honour and praise, not chastisement abroad;
And some there are who second what he dares,
(O common shame!) and what he dares, applaud:
But if Duke Godfrey seeing him defraud
Thee of thy dues, should countenance the plan,
Endure it not; but openly, unawed
By power or threats, confront the mighty man,
And show both who thou art, and what thy valour can!"

XXIII.

At the shrill music of these words, disdain
Glowed like a torch when shaken in the wind:
It fired his heart, swelled in each pregnant vein,
Flashed in his eye, and in his tongue repined:
Whatever fancied foible he could find
In young Rinaldo, he exposed to shame;
He paints him vain and arrogant of mind,
And styles his valour rashness; each fond aim
Of his ingenuous mind industrious to defame.

XXIV.

All that in him was glorious, graceful, pure,
Generous, or great, or beautiful, or wise,
Whilst his invidious arts the truth obscure,
He boldly censures as the height of vice:
This vital scorn, these wide-winged calumnies
His rival gathers in the public breath;
Yet still with no less rancour he decries
The noble Childe, nor less he scorns to sheath
In silence the keen tongue that tempts him to his death.

XXV.

For the vile fiend whose motions ruled his tongue
In lieu of judgment, influenced him to frame,
Hour after hour, fresh outrages and wrong,
Still adding fuel to the bosomed flame;—
Wide space was there in camp, where daily came
A band of gallant youths with spear and shield;
Where in gay tourney and gymnastic game
They perfected their skill, their courage steeled,
And nerved their strenuous limbs to bide a ruder field.

XXVI.

There, at an hour when thickest was the crowd.
Urged by the whisperings of the inward snake,
His tongue its customary scorn avowed,
Infused with venom of the' Avernian lake;
The knight, in hearing of the words he spake,
To irrepressible resentment stirred,
Fixed the long dues of vengeance now to take.
Shouted, "Thou liest!" and sudden as the word,
Crossed the traducer's path, and drew his poignant sword

XXVII.

His voice the thunder seemed, his sword the flash
Which of its coming warns the world; too late
Repenting fears the criminal abash,—
He saw no refuge from impending fate;
Yet in this last, irreparable strait,
As all the Camp were witnesses, he made
Proud show of courage, with a look elate
Awaited the stern foe, his distance weighed,
And in the guarding act unsheathed his battle-blade.

XXVIII.

Instant a thousand lifted swords were seen
All sparkling to one centre, and a swarm
Of warriors from all sides rushed to the scene
Of strife, to stay each warrior's angry arm:
All was vague clamour and confused alarm;
And such a sudden whirl of voices tore
The startled air, as in the gathering storm,
Among the pendant cliffs of the wild shore,
Sound the shrill murmuring winds to the loud sea wave's roar.

XXIX.

But not the prayers of thousands can allay
The' offended hero's agony of ire;
The shout, the press, the concourse of the way,
He scorns, and dares to vengeance still aspire;
Through men and arms in many a giddy gyre
His fulminating sword darts, and demands
A vacant space; the daunted crowd retire,—
And to the shame of all his guardian bands,
Free to his fierce affronts, Gernando singly stands.

XXX.

His hand, unmastered by his rage, at will
A thousand stabs delivers, and divides
With the head, heart, and bosom, as his skill
Instructs, or the unguarded part provides;
Impetuous, rapid as the foam that rides
The whirlpool, his all-present steel appears,
The eye bewilders, and its art derides;
Where least expected, there it most careers;
There most it strikes and wounds, where least his rival fears

XXXI.

Nor did it cease, until its point had found
Twice the pure lifeblood of his bosom gored;
The hapless Prince sank grovelling on his wound,
His vital spirits from the fount were poured,
And through the twofold pass his spirit soared:
The knight stayed not; his steel, incarnadined
As it had been, he to the sheath restored;
Then stalked away, and with the scene resigned
His own inflamed desires and ruthlessness of mind.

XXXII.

To the loud uproar Godfrey drawn meanwhile,
Saw dismal cause of unexpected pain,—
Gernando, his loose locks and mantle vile
Reeking with blood, with visage where, too plain,
Death spread the pallid banners of his reign;
And there were tears on many a soldier's lid,
Outcries, and shrieks, and wailings for the slain:
Amazed he asks, there where 't was most forbid,
Whose so audacious hand the deed of horror did.

XXXIII.

Arnaldo, dearest to the Prince bewailed,
In terms that sought the guilt to aggravate,
Tells how Rinaldo had his friend assailed
In the blind fury of intemperate hate,
Built on a slight and frivolous debate;
Thus, the sword vowed to Christ's blest service, he
Had turned against Christ's hallowed delegate;
Scorning not less his rule, than the decree
Long since promulged, whereof he ignorant could not be.

XXXIV.

And that the law had thus already signed
The warrant of his death;—'t was clear the case;
First, as the fact was of a heinous kind,
Next, as committed in a sacred place:
For such a crime were he to meet with grace,
Fresh criminals would rise, both bold and strong
In his escape to beard you to your face,
And execute revenge for every wrong,
Which to the Judge alone for judgment should belong.

XXXV.

Thus discord, thus dispute, thus civil ire
Would raven all, as with a tiger's tooth;
All that disdain and pity could inspire,
He pleads in merit of the murdered youth:
But Tancred with the jealousy of truth
His tale impugns, and paints in colours clear
The actual cause of strife: to which in sooth
The just Judge listens, but his brow severe
Seems less to' encourage hope than countenance his fear.

XXXVI.

"My Lord," he adds, "in wisdom weigh both who
And what Rinaldo is—his deeds recount:
Judge what regard to his deserts is due;
From princely sire to sire illustrious mount,—
Trace his long flow of glory to the fount,—
Think on his uncle Guelpho's high estate:
All equal crimes are not of like account,
Nor should the selfsame punishment await
Vassal and highborn lord, the lowly and the great."

XXXVII.

Godfrey replied, "'Tis for the great to give
Proof of obedience to the lowly; ill
Are these thy counsels, Tancred, which would leave
The Mighty to their own unbridled will.
Think what our empire were, did we fulfil
Its functions only to the vile and base,—
A powerless sceptre, or, more shameful still,
An execrated rod, derided mace!
If with such laws 't was given, I spurn your gift of grace.

XXXVIII.

"But frank and awful was it given, unsought,
Nor shall its virtue be abridged by me;
And well I know both where and when I ought
To punish and reward, and now to be
The prompt reverser of my own decree,
Yet still between the lowly and the high
Hold even Law's just balance." Thus spoke he;
Nor aught could Tancred venture to reply,
Awed by his righteous words and his majestic eye.

XXXIX.

Stern pupil of austere Antiquity,
Raymond commended his discourse, and said:
"These are the arts by which true sovereignty
Becomes revered,—for discipline is dead,
Or at the least defective, where instead
Of pain, Guilt looks for pardon: to be mild,
Power should be based in fear; when rulers spread
Too wide their mercy, Liberty runs wild,
And States decay." He ceased, and like a Spartan smiled

XL.

Tancred of his advice took silent heed;
Longer he lingered not, but leaped astride
His manageable horse, whose hoofs for speed
Seemed fledged with wings, and to Rinaldo hied;
He, soon as he had quelled the boisterous pride
Of fierce Gernando, to his private tent
Retired, the issues calmly to abide;
Here Tancred found him, and with discontent
Detailed in every point the late sharp argument.

XLI.

"And though," he adds, "I deem the visnomy
But a fallacious index of the heart,
Since oft the thoughts of mortals secret lie,
In depths that mock the' observer's nicest art;
Yet, from what Godfrey's face betrayed in part
To my perusing eye, with what his mind
Clearly avowed, I fear not to assert,
That as a common culprit he would bind
With gyves thy warrior limbs, to Law's strict power resigned."

XLII.

Rinaldo smiled; but breaking through his smile
A flash of high defiance might you see:
"Let him defend his cause in fetters vile
Who vassal is, or vassal deigns to be!
Free was I born; free have I lived: and free
Will I expire, ere one base fetter weighs
My hands down in its cankering tyranny,—
They have been used to no such slave-essays,
But to consult the sword, and reap victorious bays.

XLIII.

"If Godfrey thus reward our worth, if thus
As a base slave he would incarcerate,
And fix his foul plebeian bonds on us,
Here let him come in all his pomp of state;
I place my proud foot on the ground, and wait
His unfeared presence and his scorned decree;
Sharp arms shall be our only jurors, Fate
Sole arbitress, and foemen flock to see
The sportful drama played,—a deep, deep tragedy!"

XLIV.

He shouted for his armour, robed his form
In helm and brigandine of steel, applied
The shield enormous to his active arm,
And hung the dancing falchion at his side:
Magnificent, august, and fiery-eyed,
He sparkled in his arms like flashing levin,
And looked the God of Battle when in pride
Descending from the fifth red sphere of heaven,
In rattling iron girt, by Fright and Fury driven.

XLV.

Tancred this while used every art to soothe
His wounded pride and his intemperate rage;
"I know," said he, "that thou, unconquered youth,
Would'st in the hardiest enterprise engage;
That ever amid arms and on the edge
Of doom, thy valour is secure from harm;
But heaven forbid that e'er on such a stage
Thou shouldst let loose the gladiator's arm,
To work our army woe, and break the magic charm.

XLVI.

"Say, what is thy intent? wilt thou imbrue
Thy hands in kindred blood? with frantic aim
Wounding thy friends, transpiercing Christ anew,
Whose members they, and part of whom I am?
Shall the vain lust of transitory fame,
That like a summer sea-wave swells and dies
As the wind lists, enforce a stronger claim
Than that which faithborn piety supplies,
Of bliss all bliss beyond, eternal in the skies?

XLVII.

"No! be the victor of thyself, and still
This raging gust, this whirlwind of the mind;
Yield! from no fear, but from a virtuous will;
With worthier palms compliancy will bind
Thy brows, than ever were to pride assigned:
And if mine unripe years, though young and few,
May yield the' example, I by acts unkind
Was also once provoked, yet never drew
My sword in civil strife, but did my wrath subdue.

XLVIII.

"I took Cilicia, and on Tarsus' towers
Planted the Cross before all people's eyes,
But Baldwin came, and with his peaceful Powers
Admitted, basely robbed me of my prize;
Such friendship he professed, so fair a guise
Masked his ambitious purpose from my sight,
That ere I was aware, his avarice
Had sprung the mine: yet would not I by fight
The spoils regain, although e'en yet perhaps I might.

XLIX.

"But if indeed those ignominious bands
As a base weight thy spirit would refuse,
Following the nice opinions and demands,
The subtile laws which men of honour use,
Leave it to me thy anger to excuse;
To Antioch fly,—with Bohemond, thy friend,
Seek an asylum secret and recluse;
To wrath's first guest I deem it best to bend;
A cause by Power prejudged 't were fruitless to defer

L.

"But rest assured, if vigorously assailed,
If round us Egypt or the Arabs swarm,
Deeply indeed thy flight will be bewailed;
While, at a distance from the vast alarm,
Thy valour will acquire a tenfold charm;
Without thy sword, the nerveless camp must prove
A trunk deprived of its protecting arm:"
Here Guelph arrives, his lips the speech approve,
Urging him strait from Camp discreetly to remove.

LI.

To their grave councils the disdainful heart
Of the bold youth at length inclining, bends,
And he no longer scruples to depart
In willing exile: of his faithful friends
Meanwhile a numerous crowd his course attends;
To share his flight and fortunes each aspires,
And earnestly solicits; he commends
Their zeal with thanks, but takes alone two squires;
Vaults on his sprightly steed, and from the Camp retires.

LII.

He rides—the thirst of pure and endless glory
Inflames his spirit to the inmost core;
Exploits he plans shall shame the vaunts of story,
Ten thousand glorious deeds undreamed before,—
To rush, in favour of the Cross he bore,
Midst hostile millions, gathering in his course
Cypress or noble palms, scour Egypt o'er
As on the Samiel's wing, and passage force
E'en to the awful depths of Nile's mysterious source!

LIII.

But Guelpho, when the fervent boy at last,
Prest to depart, had bade his last adieu,
No longer there delayed, but forward passed
Where likeliest Godfrey might arrest his view;—
Who seeing him, exclaimed, "Hail Guelph! for you
I have long sought, and but this moment sent
Some of my fleetfoot heralds to pursue
The search throughout the camp, from tent to tent,
Well does thy coming now their diligence prevent!"

LIV.

He bade all else withdraw, and in a tone
Of graver utterance his discourse renewed;
"Deeply, my lord! do I regret to own
The lengths to which thy nephew has pursued
The rage admitted in his hasty mood;
He ill, methinks, can justify the brawl,
Much less the frightful issues of the feud;
Glad shall I be, if so it should befal,
But Godfrey still must act impartially to all.

LV.

"The sacred claims of lawful and of just
Defend I will, on all and each occasion,
Preserving ever, in my sovereign trust,
A heart unswayed by prejudice or passion.
Now if, as some say in extenuation,
Rinaldo was compelled his wrongs to quit,
'Gainst the known edict, and in violation
Of martial rule, why let him, as is fit,
Come, and his proofs at once to our award submit.

LVI.

"And let him come unmortified by chains,
The grace I can, I to his worth allow;
If this his high rebellious heart disdains,
(And well his fiery temperament I know
To be rebellious) be it thine to show
His pride the path of duty ere he draws
A man by nature merciful, and slow
To cherish wrath, but stern should he give cause,
To' avenge his power defied and violated laws."

LVII.

He ceased, and Guelph made answer: "Where's the soul
Free from all infamy, that if it heard
The voice of insult, haughty, false, and foul,
Would not with scorn resent the' injurious word!
And if the slanderer fall beneath the sword,
Who can place bounds to a just wrath? who suit
Exact acquittance to the guilt incurred,
Or weigh revenge out in a scale minute,
Whilst in full furv glows the' unscrupulous dispute?

LVIII.

"But that the youth, as you require, should yield
To your just judgment, which he ought, of right,
Cannot, it grieves me, be; since far from field
He has withdrawn in no imprudent flight;
But here I offer with my sword to write
Liar on his false forehead who again
Impugns his act,—on whatsoever knight
Wounds his good name; and fearlessly maintain
The Prince was justly served for his unjust disdain.

LIX.

"With reason, I aver, he shore the crest
Of arrogant Gernando; if in aught
He erred, 't was this, that thy supreme behest
He for an instant in his wrath forgot;
This I lament, and this extenuate not:"
"'T is well," the other answered, "let him wend,
And brawl elsewhere; nor foster in thy thought
The seeds of fresh dispute, but here, my friend,
Let all dissensions cease, and discord have an end!"

LX.

Thus they; meanwhile the smiling Traitress never
Ceased importuning for the promised aid;
Throughout the livelong day each strong endeavour
Of genius, art, and beauty she essayed;
But when pale Eve, in twilight stole arrayed,
Far in the west the dying Day inurned,
Betwixt two knights and matron dames conveyed,
Back to her rich pavilion she returned,
Till o'er blue orient hills resurgent morning burned.

LXI.

But though Persuasion seemed her spell-bound slave,
Spite of her bland words, her refined address,
And beauty such as nature never gave,
Before or since, dear woman to possess;
Though in the trammels of her golden tresse
A deep o'ermastering transport had enchained
The noblest heroes, not with all her stress
Of artifice, could Godfrey's heart be gained;
Unmoved, her charming smiles and flatteries he sustained.

LXII.

In vain she studied to inflame his eye
With sweet temptations to a life of love;
For as the gorged falcon scorns to fly
When the pleased hawker points the passing dove,—
So he, his wishes fixed on joys above,
Sick of the world, with mortal pleasures cloyed,
Despised the lure; her beauty failed to move,
And all the' enchanting dalliance she employed,
Tutored by faithless Love, his virtue rendered void.

LXIII.

No obstacle can turn his pious steps
From Duty's circumscribing walk; she tries
A thousand arts, in thousand changeful shapes
Appears before him, and with Proteus vies
In every form of magical disguise;
She has fond looks, lithe motions, bland alarms,
To' attract his gaze, and melt away the ice
From his cold heart, but heavenly grace disarms
Of power her visored trains, and shames her blandished charms.

LXIV.

She, who had thought one blink of her bright eyes
Would kindle passion in the purest mind,
How was she mortified! with what surprise,
Yea, with what scorn and anger she repined;
Frowning, her purpose she at length resigned,
And mustered for an enterprise more fair
Her charming force: so chieftains when they find
Impregnable the tower they gird, forbear
To press the' unprosperous siege, and turn their arms elsewhere.

LXV.

Nor less was Tancred proof to the control
Of her seducing beauty; he could share
With no new face the' affections of his soul;
Clorinda only held dominion there:
For, as used poisons oft to poisons bear
Strong countercharms, e'en so 'twixt dame and dame,
Love neutralises love; Armida's snare
These shunned—all others idolised her name,
And sported more or less around the' enchanting flame.

LXVI.

She, though she mourned that her designs should prove
But half successful, somewhat was consoled,
When she reviewed the multitudes, which Love
Beneath her conquering colours had enrolled;
And thus, ere chance to any should unfold
Her schemes, or ere her false mask should slip by,
Resolved to lead them to a stronger hold,
And forge them fetters of a stricter tie,
Than those same flowery bands in which e'en yet they lie.

LXVII.

When therefore the declining day was flown,
By Godfrey fixed to grant the promised aid,
Before him she appeared, and bending down
In humble reverence at his footstool, said:
"The period, gracious Sire, prefixed is fled;
And if the barbarous tyrant from his spies
Shall learn that I for succours here have fled,
He will prepare his powers against surprise,
And much more dangerous then will be the bold emprise.

LXVIII.

"Ere then his couriers or discursive fame
The' important tidings to his ear betray,
Let thy Compassion mine avengers name,
And send us forth, preventing all delay;
When, if the eye of Heaven with grace survey
The' affairs of mortals, if the innocent's plea
Be in its sacred scrine recorded, they
Will throne me in my realm, which thus shall be
Ever, in peace and war, subsidiary to thee."

LXIX.

She said; the Chief, unable to recede
From his engagement, bowed to her request;
And as she seemed so urgent to proceed,
Saw well the' election with himself must rest:
But of her vowed idolaters all pressed
To be admitted of the guardian band;
Whilst Jealousy, infixed in every breast,
Kept dragon watch his rivals to withstand,
And deepened with his cry the' importunate demand

LXX.

She, who the sparkling secret clearly read,
Made it at once subserve her ill intent,
Using the spur of envy and of dread,
Their lingering course to quicken and torment:
For well she knew without some impulse lent
To stir the long dejection of the mind,
The flow of love in stagnancy is spent;
Slow runs the steed that can outstrip the wind,
If one speeds not before, or follows fast behind.

LXXI.

The glance that flattered and the smile that wooed,
She shared with words so seemingly sincere,
That each grew envious of the other's good,
And hope stood trembling on the brink of fear;
Her lovers, sanctioned by her gracious cheer,
And the false charter of her loving look,
Rushed headlong on in folly's wild career,
By principle uncurbed, of shame forsook,
Reckless of Godfrey's frown, keen scorn, or sharp rebuke.

LXXII.

He, who made justice his supreme delight,
Partial to none, to gladden all aspired;
And though the follies of each amorous knight
With anger and deep shame his bosom fired;
Yet, seeing that which blindly they desired
Determinedly persisted in, he tried
Another mode to grant the boon desired:
"Each separate warrior write his name," he cried;
"A vase shall hold the lots, and chance the cause decide."

LXXIII.

Their names the Chiefs with acclamations write,
Collect, and shake within an urn of gold;
At hazard drawn, the first that leaps to light,
Is Pembroke's Earl, Artemidore the bold:
The next whose title the blind Fates unfold,
On its white leaf the name of Gerard bears;
A third the fears of Vincilas consoled,
Who, late so grave and wise in all affairs,
Now plays the lovesick youth, and shames his hoary hairs.

LXXIV.

Oh what delight these three first chosen show
At their extreme good fortune! their fond eyes
With tears that from the full heart overflow,
Grow big and sparkle o'er the happy prize;
The rest whose doom still undetermined lies
In the dark urn, show signs of secret hate,
Sore jealousy, and panting, pale surmise;
Mute on the herald's lips they hang and wait,
Breathless, the brief decree that seals their future fate.

LXXV.

To Guasco fourth, succeeds Ridolpho's name;
The sixth the fates to Olderic accord:
With Count Roussillon next, two peers of fame,
Henry the Frank, Bavarian Everard,
And, last, Rambaldo closed the blind award;—
Rambaldo, who for love of that false maid,
(Has Love indeed such power?) renounced his Lord,
A traitor knight, a perjured renegade,—
The rest, shut out from hope, their fortune loud upbraid.

LXXVI.

Inflamed with envy, jealousy, and rage,
They call her partial, wicked, and unkind;
They e'en accuse thee, Love, that thou should'st gage
Thy judgment to an arbitress so blind:
But, as instinctively the human mind
More ardently desires what Heaven denies,
Many, in spite of fortune, have designed
To follow yet their Lady in disguise,
Soon as night's falling shades obscure the lucid skies.

LXXVII.

Follow they will, in sunshine and in shade,
And venture life in battling for her right:
She her last thanks to all saluting paid,
With broken hints and sighings, that incite
The Chiefs yet more to their intended flight;
With this, with that she grieved, or seemed to grieve,
That she must part without the dear delight
Of his desired society;—'t is eve;
The' elected Champions arm, and throng to take their leave.

LXXVIII.

Each after each the Chief advised apart
That Pagan faith was but a hollow reed,
As light and insecure; and with what art
They should from snares and adverse ills recede:
His words are uttered to the winds—none heed
His wise advice; for when did Wisdom sway
The ear of Love? permitted to proceed,
At length they part; Armida leads the way,
All too impatient she to wait the dawn of day.

LXXIX.

Conqueress she parts, and in a sumptuous train,
Triumphal, leads along her rival foes;
Whilst still behind a countless throng remain,
Lovelorn, abandoned to a thousand woes.
But when the Night on silent wings arose,
By Peace consorted in her gentle mood,
And Dreams, the erring pupils of Repose—
With Love's divine intelligence endued,
Their Lady's printless path they secretly pursued.

LXXX.

First Eustace followed: scarcely could he wait
The lingering hours of ebbing eve,—he hied
Swiftly away, with heart and hope elate,
Through the blind darkness, led by his blind guide;
All the moist night serene he wandered wide;
But when the sky's proud Sultan had possessed
The ruby gates of morning, he descried
With all her guards the Lady of his quest,
In a small village near, her last night's bower of rest.

LXXXI.

Him by his arms at once Rambaldo knew,
As on fleet foot he moved to join the maid,
And cried aloud: "What seek'st thou? with what view
Com'st thou to us, in helm and mail arrayed?"
"I come," said Eustace, "in Armida's aid;
Nor shall she have, if she my zeal approve,
A trustier friend." "And who," Rambaldo said,
"On this high task commissioned thee to move?
Who authorised thy flight?" "Love," Eustace answered,
"Love!

LXXXII.

"Venus was my Electress, Fortune thine;
Advise which has the most authentic grant!"
To whom Rambaldo: "Off! the claim resign;
False is thy title, and impugned thy vaunt;
With us, legitimately called to plant
This virgin lily, ne'er shalt thou ally
Thy lawless aid!" Indignant at the taunt,
The youth rejoined, "And who will dare deny
My claims at proof of sword?" Rambaldo answered, "I!

LXXXIII.

"That which I dare avow, I dare maintain
At my sword's point!" he said, and saying drew:
Not with less ardour, not with less disdain
Insulted Eustace to the quarrel flew:
But here their Mistress rushed betwixt the two;
Staying their swords, she soothed their angry vein:
To that she uttered, "What is it you do;
If you a comrade, I a champion gain,
Why should you take offence? of what can I complain?

LXXXIV.

"Seek you my safety? why would you deprive
My straitened cause of so renowned a knight?"
To Eustace then, "Most welcome! you arrive
In happy hour, protector of my right:
What shade of reason can I have to slight
So grateful an ally, the prince of Franks!
Fortune forbid I should the zeal requite
With rude neglect!" whilst yet she paid her thanks,
From every quarter round, fresh champions joined her ranks.

LXXXV.

Unknown to each they came, and frowned askance
With hatred at their rivals; she received
All with the like smooth smiling countenance,
And whispered them what comfort she conceived
From their arrival: now when Light relieved
The dusky watch of morning, Godfrey knew
Of their defection and his loss; he grieved,
Deeply he grieved o'er the prophetic view
Sealed on his sight, of ills that hence must needs ensue.

LXXXVI.

Whilst musing thus, a messenger appears,
Swift, dusty, out of breath, a shape of woe;
Like one who news of bitter import bears,
With grief engraven on his gloomy brow:
"Signior," he said, "the' Egyptian fleets e'en now
Put out to sea, and crowd all sails in air;
Grey ocean whitens with the moving show:
William the Admiral, beneath whose care
The Genoese navy ranks, this message bids me bear.

LXXXVII.

"Nay, more; our convoy from the navied seas,
Well victualled for the camp, its fate has found;
One night, encamped among palmetto trees,
The steeds and burdened camels grazing round,
A horde of Arabs in the glen profound
Ambushed, sprang forth, the slumberers to assail
In front and flank; they slew them, or they bound
As slaves of war; nor from the fatal vale
Did one escape, but he who bore the' afflicting tale.

LXXXVIII.

"The' audacity of these marauding bands
Is now grown so licentious, that they spread
Like an o'erwhelming torrent from the sands,
Without control, and to a desert tread
The fruitful fields they traverse; to strike dread
Into their hearts, 't is fit that thou ordain
A troop of horse their coverts to invade;
And from the sea of Palestine, the plain
That to the army leads, inviolate maintain."

LXXXIX.

These tidings, magnified from tongue to tongue,
Known in a moment, palsied every ear;
On every rumour the light vulgar hung,
In all the' uncertainty of anxious fear;
For fancied Famine was already near,
And the grim skeleton of Death: the Chief,
Who saw their courage droop, essayed to cheer
Their dying hopes, and to disperse their grief,
With lively looks and words persuasive of relief

XC.

"Ye, who through thousand perils, long flown o'er,
Have passed secure with me, in war and peace!
Champions of God, elected to restore
His frustrate faith! who over hills and seas,
The arms of Persia, the designs of Greece,
Thirst's burning torment, hunger's keen distress,
Frost, whirlwind, storm, the billow and the breeze,
Have triumphed gloriously, oh say, for less
Alarms shall daunting fear your spirits now possess?

XCI.

"In the good care of God, whose Spirit gave
Your mind its impulse, can ye not confide?
Is his arm shortened, that it cannot save?
That arm so oft in deeper perils tried!
A time will come, not distantly descried,
When to remember every past dismay
Will be no less a pleasure than a pride;
Hold then courageous on, and keep I pray,
Your noble hearts in cheer for that victorious day."

XCII.

These words of Godfrey, and his lively air,
Exiled their terror, and revived their pride;
But many a preying thought and anxious care
Deeply secreted, in his breast abide;
How for such various nations to provide
In the prevailing scarceness; how afford
Help to his navy on the ocean wide,
Against the' Egyptian fleet! and how his sword
May fitly reach and quell the Arabs' plundering horde.

CANTO VI.

Stanza cviii.

ARGUMENT.

ARGANTES dares the Franks to single fight;
His prowess first the' undaunted Otho shows,
Too rashly; tumbled from his steed, by right
Of martial law he into thraldom goes.
Tancred, whom Godfrey for his champion chose,
Renews the conflict, and his falchion plies
Till twilight's gathering glooms a truce impose;
To cure her wounded lord, Erminia hies
From the well-guarded town, at dew-fall, in disguise.

I.

BUT better hopes inspirit and make blithe
The hearts of the besieged: beside the grain
Stored from the reaping sickle and the scythe,
Beneath night's favouring darkness they obtain
Fresh stores; and flank, and fortify amain
With engines and grim frieze the Northern wall;
Which, grown to giant height, seems to disdain
The shock of brazen rams, as idle all,
Nor dreads what man can do to work its purposed fall.

II.

Yet still at morn, at eve, at radiant noon,
The Monarch higher gives his towers to soar;
Nor quits his labour when the stars and moon
Silver the dusk of night; and evermore,
New arms for battle forging to the roar
Of sweltering fires, armourer and artisan
Toil with strong limbs, till vigour be no more.
As thus the' intolerable moments ran,
To him Argantes came, and boastful thus began:

III.

"How long in these vile walls must we be bound,
Rebellious prisoners, tamed by slow blockade?
I hear the clang of anvils; the shrill sound
From hauberk, helm, and shield, my ears invade;
But to what purpose is the proud parade?
These robbers at their license don the crest;
Scour all our fields; our palaces invade;
Yet none of us their progress dare molest,
Or one clear trumpet sound, to scare their golden rest.

IV.

"Them the gay lute and bounding dance employ,
Unbroken banquets and secure delights;
Their day is one long carnival of joy,
And ease and quiet crown their blissful nights:
But thou at length, when fiercely famine bites,
Conquered must fall, and with submission buy
The victor's insults and the foe's despites;
Or die without a blow, as cowards die,
If Cairo send not soon our lingering, late ally.

V.

"Ne'er o'er the dial of my life shall run
The oblivious darkness of a death it hates;
Not e'en the lustre of another sun
Shall see me shut within these cursed gates!
With this, my life's poor fragment, let the Fates
Do what is fixed for it in heaven or hell;
None e'er shall say in these inglorious straits,
That with his sword in sheath Argantes fell;
He will revenge disgrace, and earn his tomb too well.

VI.

"But if one spark of thy first chivalry
Still in thy bosom shed its fervent charm,
I should not hope in noble strife to die,
But live, enriched with honour's proudest palm;
With one accord let us resolve to arm,
Confront the Christians, and the field contest;
How oft in deepest peril and alarm,
The most audacious strokes have proved the best;
And ills which Care increased, Distraction has redressed!

VII.

"But if thou dread'st to play so bold a game;
If to stake all thy forces to decide
The war at once, he judged a frantic aim,—
At least in duel let the strife be tried:
And that with livelier willingness and pride
The Captain of the Franks may entertain
Our challenge, and the' arbitrement abide,
Let him chose arms, take vantage of the plain,
And fix the terms of fight as he himself may deign.

VIII.

"Then, if no hundred-handed Briareus
Arm on his side, how fierce soe'er he be,
Dread not that evil chance thy cause will lose,
Upheld by justice, and secured by me;
In place of fate and fortune's blind decree,
My strong right hand shall from the stars pluck down
Consummate conquest for thy realms and thee:
Grasp it in pledge; now, by my old renown,
Trust me, they shall not shake one jewel from thy crown!"

IX.

He ceased, and Aladine replied: "In truth,
Though Age my pristine vigour has defaced,
Think not this scrupulous hand, too fervent youth,
A traitor to the sword it once embraced;
Think not my spirit slothful or debased;
Sooner with honour by the sword or spear
Would I expire, than die a death disgraced;
If I could entertain misdoubt or fear
That the distressful ills announced were really near.

X.

"Allah such shame avert! What deep my art
From others hides, to thee shall now be shown:
The mighty Solyman, who burns in part
To' avenge the loss of his Nicean throne,
Has roused Arabia from her utmost zone
Of sand to Alcaïro, and relies
On all her tribes, when once his trumpet's blown,
In the black night the foeman to surprise,
And pour into the town fresh succour and supplies.

XI.

"Soon will he join us; if meanwhile they reign
In our spoiled castles, blinded by conceit
And careless ease, fret not, whilst I retain
My purple mantle and imperial seat;
But that rash courage and intemperate heat
Which hurries thee to such excess, abate;
And for a dignified occasion, meet
For thy renown and my deep vengeance, wait;—
Soon the black storm will burst, and lightnings seal their fate."

XII.

The haughty Pagan frowned at this: high pride
And bitter spite boiled in his breast, to hear
How on this Nicene prince the king relied,
His ancient rival and most fierce compeer:
"Sir," he replied, in icy tone austere,
"'T is thy undoubted right to wage or end
War at thy pleasure; I have done; wait here
The shivered sword of Solyman thy friend;
Let him who lost his own thy kingdoms safe defend.

XIII.

"Proud as a patron God let him advance
To free thy people from their yoke abhorred;
Myself am my palladium 'gainst mischance,
Nor freedom ask but from this single sword.
But whilst the rest repose, the grace accord,
That I at least may my own wrongs requite;
That from the town descending to the sward,
Not as thy champion but a private knight,
I may at least engage the Franks in single fight."

XIV.

The king replied, "Although thou shouldst reserve
Thy sword and anger for a nobler use,
That thou defy some knight, if that will serve
Thy purpose, Aladine will not refuse."
His herald then without a moment's truce
Argantes spake, and with the daring boast
Dilating said; "Give all thy swiftness loose;
And let this not mean challenge be proposed
To the Frank Duke below, in hearing of his host.

XV.

"Say, that a knight who longer scorns to crouch
Within the marble ramparts of the town,
Burns in the eye of angels to avouch,
By fact of arms, his prowess and renown;
That he to duel hastens to come down
Upon the plain midway 'twixt tent and tower;
To prove his valour on the golden crown
Of whatsoever Frank, of Franks the flower,
Dares to accept the gage, and try his martial power.

XVI.

"And that not only is he girt to wage
Victorious battle with a single foe,
But with the third, fourth, fifth he will engage,
Villain or lord, with highborn or with low;
The vanquished shall the victor serve, for so
The rules of war ordain:" his message done,
The silver-sceptred herald turned to go,
And lightly threw his purple surcoat on,
Emblazed with golden arms that glittered in the sun.

XVII.

When reached the tent of Godfrey the divine,
In presence of his Barons, "Prince," he said,
"May perfect liberty of speech be mine
To tell a daring message without dread?"
He in assent inclined a haughty head,
And answered, "Ay! without the thought of fear,
Before us be the mighty venture spread:"
Then thus the herald, "Now will it appear
If the great news sound sweet or frightful to your ear."

XVIII.

The knight's defiance he at large exposed,
In glorying terms, magnificent and high;—
Loud murmured the fierce Lords, and round him closed,
Scorn on each lip, and pride in every eye:
Quickly their Lion-leader gave reply:
"A modest task methinks the knight has mused:
What think ye, Peers? dare we the battle try?
Much I misdoubt when he his sword has used
On the fourth knight, the fifth will wish to stand excused!

XIX.

"But let him put it to the proof; I grant
Safe field and liberal; we have some shall dare
Advance, to lessen his presumptuous vaunt,—
They shall no vantage use, nor fact unfair,
I lift my sceptre to the stars, and swear:"
This heard, the sovereign of the silver mace
Turned back by the same path he trod whilere;
Nor till he saw Argantes face to face
Slacked, for a moment slacked, the swiftness of his pace.

XX.

"Arm!" he exclaimed, "why hesitate to arm?
The challenge they accept with glad surprise;
Like sovereign heroes there the meanest swarm
To front you,—vizors close, and lances rise;
I saw rage lighten in a thousand eyes;
I saw a thousand hands caress the sword
In passion for the fight; hark, how the skies
Sound to their shout, as though a river roared!—
Safe guard and ample field their Captain will afford."

XXI.

He heard, he called his Squire, and hurriedly
Braced on his mail, impatient for the plain;
Whilst to the fair Clorinda standing by,
The king exclaimed; "Brave Lady! to abstain
From arms, and in the city to remain,
Whilst free Argantes issues out to fight,
Suits not thy rank; take then an armed train
For surer safety, and attend the knight;
At distance range their spears, but keep the lists in sight."

XXII.

He ceased, and soon under the open sky
The troop rode forth in beautiful array,
And marked far on before how gallantly
The knight, in wonted arms and trappings gay,
Cheered to the frequent spur his ardent bay:—
A plain there was, seemed formed by art, between
The camp and town; of wide extent it lay,
As though the Campus Martius it had been
Before another Rome, unswelling, smooth, and green.

XXIII.

There singly he descended; there, in sight
Of the collected Camp his station took;
By his brave heart, great bulk, and brawny might
Magnificent, and menacing in look
As huge Goliath by the vale's clear brook,
Or grim Enceladus, before whose stride
The' aërial pines, and fields of Phlegra shook;
But many without fear the giant eyed,
For none his utmost strength in battle yet had tried.

XXIV.

Though Godfrey yet no champion had selected,
Whose bravery best the Camp might represent,
It was no secret whom they most affected—
All eyes, hopes, wishes were on Tancred bent;
To him the favour of all faces lent,
Spoke him the' ascendant genius of the crowd;
And first a whisper round the circle went,
Which, faint awhile, grew momently more loud;
Nor less the General's looks his own desire avowed.

XXV.

To him the rest give place, nor silent then
Remained the Duke; "The tilt be thine," he cried;
"Tancred, meet thou the ruffian Saracen,
Repress his fury, and abase his pride."
In Tancred's face I would you had descried
What exultation shone, what boldness glowed;
Proud to be named the' antagonist defied,
He called for helm and steed; his steed bestrode;
And straight with numerous friends from forth the' entrenchments rode.

XXVI.

Within a bowshot of the ample field
Wherein Argantes for his champion stayed,
On the near hill, upgazing, he beheld
The warlike figure of his Persian maid:
White were the vests that o'er her armour strayed,
As snows on Alpine glaciers, and her face,
(For she her vizor had thrown up), displayed
Grandeur sublime so sweetening into grace,—
The region seemed to him some heavenly-haunted place.

XXVII.

He noted not where the Circassian reared
His frightful face to the affronted skies,
But to the hill-top where his Love appeared,
Turned, slackening his quick pace, his amorous eyes,
Till he stood steadfast as a rock, all ice
Without, all glowing heat within;—the sight
To him was as the gates of Paradise;
And from his mind the memory of the fight
Passed like a summer cloud, or dream at morning light.

XXVIII.

The' impatient Pagan, seeing none appear
In act preparative for battle, cried:
"Desire of gallant conflict brought me here;
Come forward one, and let the tilt be tried."
Still Tancred stood as he were stupified;
The hero's shout broke not his thoughtful trance;
But Otho, striking in his courser's side
His shining rowels, bravely made advance
First in the vacant lists, and couched his eager lance.

XXIX.

He was of those whose ardent hope and aim
It was with fierce Argantes to have fought;
To Tancred he indeed resigned his claim,
And with the rest that Prince to battle brought;
But noticing him now, absorbed in thought,
Fail the desired advantage to employ,—
Seeing the tourney he before had sought
Free to his lance, the bold impatient boy
Seized on the offered chance with rash and greedy joy.

XXX.

Swift as the tiger or voracious pard
Springs through the crashing forest, Otho pressed
To the stout Mussulman, who, on good guard,
Laid his tremendous spear in sudden rest:
Then Tancred first awoke; then from the zest
Of amorous thoughts as from a sweet dream started;
And cried, "The fight is mine! his course arrest!"
But the young champion now too far had darted
Within the lists, to be from his opponent parted.

XXXI.

Therewith he stayed, whilst wrath and crimson shame
Glowed on his cheek, and in his bosom boiled,
Deeming it worse than falsehood to his fame,
Thus of the field's first risks to be beguiled:
Meantime in mid career the hardy Childe
Struck the Circassian's burganet, and tore
The feathers from its crown; but he, half wild,
With naked spear implacable for gore, [bore!
Quite clove his Redcross shield, and through the breast-plate

XXXII.

Pushed from his seat by rudeness of the blow,
The Christian fell, half senseless from the shock;
But his more vigorous and athletic foe
Bore it unbowed, impassive as a rock;
And thus began the prostrate knight to mock,—
Fierce was his gesture, insolent his tone,—
"Yield thee my slave! where proudest nobles flock,
'T will be enough for thy renown, to own
That thou hast fought with me, and thus been overthrown!"

XXXIII.

"No!" said the youth, "not quite so soon we use
To yield our arms and ardour on command;
Let others as they list my fall excuse,
I will revenge it, or die sword in hand!"
Fierce as Alecto, pitilessly grand,
With all the Gorgon raging in his face,
And breath like that of Atè's flaming brand,
Argantes said, "And scorn'st thou my good grace?
Learn then my power!" he spoke, and speaking spurned the place.

XXXIV.

His rampant steed he drove at him, nor heeded
What to his chivalry was due; the Frank
From the rude onset, quick as thought, receded,
And dealt, in passing, at his dexter flank
A stroke so strong, that through his armour sank
The sword, incarnadine with blood;—the ground
Some rosy drops of the libation drank;
But what availed it to inflict a wound
That raised the conquerer's rage, and left his vigour sound?

XXXV.

He curbed his courser, whirled him round, bore back,
And almost in the twinkling of an eye,
Ere his charged foe could guard against the' attack,
Trampled him down in grim ferocity:
Short drew his breath; quivered in agony
His legs, and with a faint, lamenting shriek
He swooned away; now low behold him lie,—
On the hard earth thrown panting, bruised, and weak;
Half closed the languid eye, and pale the suffering cheek.

XXXVI.

Argantes, drunk with rage, enforced his way
With high curvettings o'er his victim's chest;
And cried, "Let all proud knights obedience pay,
Like him whom thus my horse's hoofs have pressed:"
Undaunted Tancred in his manly breast
At this barbaric action could restrain
His wrath no longer; shaking his black crest,
He forward spurred, ambitious to regain
His wonted fame eclipsed, and clear its recent stain.

XXXVII.

"And oh," he cried, advancing, "spirit base!
E'en in thy conquests, infamous! what meed,
What title to esteem, what claim to praise
Hop'st thou, accurst, from such a villain's deed!
With Arab robbers or the like fierce breed
Of ruffians, surely thou wert bred;—away!
Back to thy loathed den of darkness speed;
Midst hills and woods go raven for thy prey
With other wolves by night, more savage far than they!"

XXXVIII.

The Pagan Lord, to such affronts unused,
Bit both his lips, wrath's strangled orators;
He would have spoke, but only sounds confused
Broke forth, such sounds as when a lion roars;
Or, as when lightning cleaves the stormy doors
Of heaven, to rouse from its reluctant rest
The thunder growling as the tempest pours;
For every word which he with pain expressed,
Escaped in tones as gruff, from his infuriate breast.

XXXIX.

When by ferocious threats they each had fired
His rival's pride, and fortified his own,
Some paces back they rapidly retired,
And met, like two black clouds together blown.
Queen of the Lyre! down from thy Delphic throne
Descend with all thy talismans and charms;
Breathe in my ringing shell thy hoarsest tone,
That to their rage attempered, its alarms
May with the shock, repeat the clangour of their arms!

XL.

Both placed in rest, and levelled at the face
Their knotty lances;—ne'er did tiger's spring,
Nor ardent charger in the rushing race,
Match their swift course, nor bird of swiftest wing;
Here Tancred, there Argantes came!—to sing
The force with which they met, would ask the cry
Of angels,—sudden the shocked helmets ring;
Their spears are broke; and up to the blue sky
A thousand lucid sparks, a thousand shivers fly.

XLI.

That shrill blow shook Earth's firm volubil ball;
The mountains, sounding as the metals clashed,
Passed the dire music to the towers, till all
The City trembled; but the shock, which dashed
Both steeds to earth, as each for anguish gnashed
Its teeth, and shrieked its noble life away,
Scarce bowed their haughty heads; they, unabashed,
Sprang lightly up, war's perfect masters they,
Drew their gold-hilted swords and stood at desperate bay.

XLII.

Warily deals each warrior's arm its thrust,
His foot its motion, its live glance his eye;
To various guards and attitudes they trust;
They foin, they dally, now aloof, now nigh,
Recede, advance, wheel, traverse, and pass by,
Threat where they strike not, where they threat not, dart
The desperate pass; or, with perception sly,
Free to the foe leave some unguarded part,
Then his foiled stroke revenge, with art deriding art.

XLIII.

Prince Tancred's thigh the Pagan knight perceives
But ill defended, or by shield or sword;
He hastes to strike, and inconsiderate leaves
His side unshielded as he strides abroad;
Tancred failed not instinctively to ward
The stroke, beat back the weapon, and, inspired
With eager hope, the guardless body gored;
Which done, of either gazing host admired,
He nimbly back recoiled, and to his ward retired.

XLIV.

The fierce Argantes, when he now beheld
Himself in his own gushing blood baptized,
In unaccustomed horror sighed and yelled,
With shame discountenanced, and with pain surprised;
And, both by rage and suffering agonised,
Raised with his voice his sword aloft, to quit
The sharp rebuke; but Tancred, well advised
Of his intent, afresh the' assailant smit,
Where to the nervous arm the shoulder-blade was knit.

XLV.

As in its Alpine forest the grim bear,
Stung by the hunter's arrow, from its haunts
Flies in the face of all his shafts to dare
Death for the wild revenge, no peril daunts;
Just so the mad Circassian fares, so pants
For blood, as thus the foe his soul besets,
When shame on shame, and wound on wound ne plants;
And his revenge his wrath so keenly whets,
That he all danger scorns, and all defence forgets.

XLVI.

Joining with courage keen a valour rash,
And untired strength with unexampled might,
He showers his strokes so fast, that the skies flash,
And earth e'en trembles in her wild affright:
No time has the alarmed Italian knight
To deal a single blow; from such a shower
Scarce can he shield himself, scarce breathe; no sleight
Of arms is there to' assure his life an hour
From the man's headstrong haste and brute gigantic power.

XLVII.

Collected in himself, he waits in vain
Till the first fury of the storm be past;
Now lifts his moony targe; now round the plain
Fetches his skilful circles, far and fast;
But when he sees the Pagan's fierceness last
Through all delay, his own proud blood takes fire;
And, staking all his fortunes on the cast,
He whirls his sword in many a giddy gyre,
Requiting strength with strength, and answering ire with ire.

XLVIII.

Judgment and skill are lost in rage; rage gives
Resentment life; fresh force resentment lends;
Where falls the steel, it either bores or cleaves
Chainplate or mail; plumes shiver, metal bends,
Helms crack, and not a stroke in vain descends;
The ground is strewed with armour hewn asunder,
Armour with blood, with ruby blood sweat blends;
Each smiting sword appears a whirling wonder,
Its flash the lightning's fire, its sullen clang far thunder.

XLIX.

Both gazing nations anxious hung suspended
Upon a spectacle so wild and new;
With fear, with hope the issue they attended,
Some good or ill perpetually in view;
Not the least beck or slightest whisper flew
Mid the two hosts so lately in commotion;
All nerve alone, all eye, all ear, they grew
Fixt, mute, and soundless as an eve-lulled ocean,
Save what the beating heart struck in its awful motion.

L.

Now tired were both; and both, their spirits spent,
Had surely perished on the field of fight,
Had not dim eve her lengthening shadows sent,
And e'en of nearest things obscured the sight;
And now on either side in apposite
Array, a reverend herald rose, and sought
From the keen strife to separate each his knight;
This Aridos, Pindoro that, who brought
Of late the' insulter's boast, and terms on which they fought.

LI.

Safe in the sacred laws of nations kept
Religiously from hallowing age to age,
The swords of both they dare to intercept
With their pacific sceptres, and the sage
Pindoro spoke, "Suspend, my sons, your rage:
Equal your glory, equal is your might;
No longer then the' inveterate warfare wage,
Nor with rude sounds unamiable affright
Rashly the holy ear of quiet-keeping Night!

LII.

"Lulled in soft rest by night each creature lies;
Man should but toil while shines the daily sun,
And noble bosoms will but lightly prize
E'en noble deeds in silent darkness done."
Argantes then: "To quit the strife begun
Pleases me ill, though darkness ride the air;
Yet worthier far will be my conquest won
Beneath the eye of day; then let him swear,
Here for fresh proof of arms again to make repair."

LIII.

To whom the high Italian: "Thou too plight
Thy promise to return and bring with thee
Thy captive to the lists, or ne'er, proud knight,
Look thou for other time than this from me."
Thus swear they both by what may holiest be;
And the choice heralds meditate what time
May best subserve the combat; they decree,
(Considerate of their wounds) the hour of prime,
When the sixth morning's breeze sheds coolness through the clime.

LIV.

This dreadful battle left in every heart
Deep horror, mighty wonder, and chill fear,
Which cannot be forgot, nor soon depart,
And open gloom and counterfeited cheer.
The force and valour shown by either peer
Alone the talk of all employed—how well,
And stubbornly they fought; but which with clear
Pre-eminence of power did most excel,
Perplexed the vulgar thought; in sooth no tongue could tell.

LV.

All wait in sharp anxiety to see
What fate will crown the strife; if rage shall quail
To the calm virtue of pure chivalry,
Or giant strength o'er hardihood prevail:
But deepest cares and doubts distract the pale
And sensitive Erminia; her fond heart
A thousand agonies and fears assail;
Since, on the cast of war's uncertain dart,
Hangs the sweet life she loves, her soul's far dearer part.

LVI.

She, daughter to Cassano, who the crown
Wore of imperial Antioch, in the hour
When the flushed Christians won the stubborn town,
With other booty fell in Tancred's power:
But he received her as some sacred flower,
Nor harmed her shrinking leaves; midst outrage keen
Pure and inviolate was her virgin-bower;
And her he caused to be attended, e'en
Amidst her ruined realms, as an unquestioned queen.

LVII.

The generous knight in every act and word
Honoured her, served her, soothed her deep distress,
Gave her her freedom, to her charge restored
Her gems, her gold, and bade her still possess
Her ornaments of price: the sweet Princess,
Seeing what kingliness of spirit shined
In his engaging form and frank address,
Was touched with love; and never did Love bind
With his most charming chain a more devoted mind.

LVIII.

Thus, though in person free, her spirit ever
Remained his willing thrall; and many a tear,
Many a last look, many a vain endeavour,
It cost her to depart from one so dear,
And quit her blissful cage; but shame austere,
And princely chastity, whose least command
The high-souled lady ever must revere,
Forced her to take her aged mother's hand,
And an asylum seek in some far friendly land.

LIX.

To towered Jerusalem she came, and there
Was richly entertained; but 't was her doom,
Too soon the sable vests of woe to wear,
And plant the cypress round her mother's tomb;
But not the grief, the sickness, and the gloom,
Not all that bitter exile could inspire,
From her delicious cheek might brush the bloom,
The rosy bloom of amorous desire,
Or quench in her soft heart pure Passion's lingering fire.

LX.

She loved, she glowed, poor girl! and yet was far
From happy, for her love hoped no return;
Indeed she turned far oftener to the star
Of Memory, than of Hope; as in an urn
Hiding within her breast the thoughts that burn
Fiercest in secret; to foment the flame,
Vain as it was, was long her sole concern;
Till with the war to Salem, Tancred came,
And Hope again flashed forth like lightning through her frame.

LXI.

Others beheld with gloom and pale dismay
Such tameless numbers to the plain advance:
But her dark looks at once grew bright, and gay
She marked the banners float, the white plumes dance;
And rolled throughout the host an eager glance,
The generous hero of her heart to see;
Oft the vain search her sadness would enhance;
Yet oft she recognised him, in fond glee
Shook her rich locks, and said: "That, that indeed is he

LXII.

Near to the walls, within the palace, soared
A lofty tower antique, from whose steep height
The eye at its own pleasant will explored
The camp, the mountains, and the field of fight;
There would she sit from the first hour that light
Bathed the grey battlements, till seas and skies
Grew dark with the impurpling hues of night;—
There would she sit, fond dreamer! with her eyes
Turned to the Christian camp, and spend her soul in sighs.

LXIII.

'T was thence she viewed that battle, whose least blow
Made her heart tremble in its dainty cell,
And send its strong pulsations to and fro,
As if in solemn tone it tolled the knell
Of hope, and sounded to her soul—"Farewell
To Tancred!" troubled thus, with fear profound
She watched each fortune that her knight befel;
And ever as the Pagan's sword flew round,
Felt in her own fond heart and brain the' inflicted wound.

LXIV.

But when the fatal tidings reached her ear
That the fierce conflict must afresh be tried,
Her sick blood curdled in its flow; blank fear
Appalled her, and her heart within her died;
Now she poured forth wild tears; now sorely sighed;
And now to unseen glooms stole, seeking there
The strong convulsions of her soul to hide;
Grief in her gaze, distraction in her air,
She seemed the passive slave and picture of Despair.

LXV.

And frightful shapes and images possessed
The organs of her fancy; types and themes
More drear than death, if e'er she sank to rest,
Thronged to her sleep, and shook her midnight dreams:
Now to her sight her loved Crusader seems
Mangled and bleeding, or assaulted rears
To her his fond beseeching arms, and screams
For her vain help; till leaping with her fears,
She wakes, and finds her eyes and bosom bathed with tears.

LXVI.

But dread of future ills was not the worst
Of her solicitudes; rude visitings
Of fancy thoughtful of his wounds unnursed,
Ruffled her soul, and loosed its silver springs;
Nor less each fresh report that Rumour brings
In her fallacious circuit, magnifies
Her picturings of unknown and distant things,
Till she at length admits the wild surmise,
That at the point of death her languid warrior lies.

LXVII.

And as her mother taught her in her youth
The virtues of all herbs by saint or sage
For medicine culled, with all the charms that soothe
The thrilling wound, and calm the fever's rage,—
An art which from the Patriarchal Age
The East's prescriptive usages accord
To virgins e'en of princely parentage—
With her own hand would she, of risk unawed,
Tend, and to health restore the bruises of her lord.

LXVIII.

To heal her love was her desire, to cure
His foe her bitter task: she thought to seek
Sometimes for poisonous herbs that might ensure
His death; but such malignant arts her meek
And pious hands recoiled from—she could speak,
Not execute the scheme: but she might nurse
At least the wish, her piety to pique,
That some kind power the blessings would reverse
Of all her balms and spells, and change them to a curse.

LXIX.

She had no fear to go midst adverse nations,
Who was so much a pilgrim; she had seen
The anarchy of battle, desolations,
Adversities, and slaughters; and had been
So tossed by Fate through each tumultuous scene,
That now her gentle mind a strength displayed
That was not in its nature—fixed, serene;
No more to shake with every wind that played
Amongst the midnight woods, nor shriek at every shade.

LXX.

But more than all, Love, headstrong Love, removed
From her all sense of fear: she would have faced,
Devoid of terror, for the man she loved,
The snakes and lions of the Lybian waste,
And deemed her passage sure; but though in haste
To please her will existence she disdained,
She trembled lest her name should be disgraced:
Two potent rivals, Love and Honour, reigned
Within her maiden breast, and dubious strife maintained.

LXXI.

"Beloved young Virgin," Honour whispered, "well
Hast thou preserved my statutes to this hour!
Think how I kept, by mine immortal spell,
Chaste thy fair limbs when in the spoiler's power;
And wilt thou, now that thou art free, the flower
Of holy Chastity unwooed resign,
So closely treasured then? beshrew thy bower?
How canst thou once indulge the dread design!
What thoughts, alas, what hopes, dear maid, are these of thine!

LXXII.

"Hold'st thou thy glory at a price so slight,
The priceless glory of a maiden's fame,
That thou must go, Love's paranymph, by night
Mid adverse hosts to court unquestioned shame?
'No,' the proud victor coolly will exclaim,
'Thou with thy throne thy dignity of mind
Hast lost—a prize so worthless I disclaim;'—
Say, canst thou brook to be by one so kind
To some more vulgar feere contemptuously resigned?"

LXXIII.

Next Love, the flattering sophist, with a tongue
Sweet as the nightingale's, her soul beguiled;
"Thou wert not, gentle maid, from rude rocks sprung,
Or nursed by wild wolves in the fruitless wild,
That thou shouldst scorn soft Cytherea's child,
His admirable bow and dulcet dart,
Forswearing bliss; then blush not to be styled
His votaress, young and charming as thou art—
Heaven ne'er has cursed that form with an unyielding heart.

LXXIV.

"Go then where mild Desire thy steps invites!
Canst thou conceive thy victor harsh or vain,
Who know'st how much thy grief his grief incites,
How thy complaints e'en move him to complain?
'T is not his harshness then, but thy disdain
That thou shouldst deprecate, who with so slow
An inclination mov'st to ease his pain:
Thy virtuous Tancred dies, stern girl, and lo—
Thou must be sitting here to aid his worthless foe!

LXXV.

"Yes, cure Argantes, that his sword may smite
Thy benefactor to the dead! what then,
Wouldst thou thus cancel, wouldst thou thus requite
The' unmeasured kindness of the best of men?
Canst thou once doubt, that the vile Saracen
Will fail on Tancred and on thee to bring
Yet sharper pangs, restored to arms again?
Let the mere dread and horror of the thing
Suffice to speed thee hence as on the turtle's wing.

LXXVI.

"It would be some humanity to stand
His dutiful physician! what delight
Would it not be to lay thy healing hand
Upon the brave man's breast! how exquisite
To watch, as at thy call, the roseate light
Of health descend with freshness to displace
The pallid hues which now his beauty blight;
And on the colouring roses of his face,
As on thine own rich gifts, admiringly to gaze!

LXXVII.

"So shouldst thou share in all the after-fame
Of his romantic exploits; so should sweet
And unreproved caresses crown thy flame;
And prosperous nuptials make thy joy complete:
Then into beauteous Italy, the seat
Of high-born worth, thou go'st, a glorious bride;
Whilst Latin girls and mothers at thy feet
Scatter young flowers, and point at thee with pride,
Seated in Tancred's car, like Love by Valour's side."

LXXVIII.

With these light hopes, sweet simple girl, upbuoyed,
She fondly deemed all Paradise her own;
Yet still a thousand doubts her mind annoyed—
How could she pass out through the gates, unknown;
For trumpets at the least alarm were blown,
And stationed guards paraded, without pause,
The court, the streets, and ramparts of the town;
Nor might the gates, by Aladine's wise laws,
Be night or day unbarred, but on some urgent cause.

LXXIX.

It was Erminia's wont, long hours, to hold
Converse with brave Clorinda: them the sun
Together viewed, as down the skies he rolled—
Them, when his orient progress was begun;
And when his circuit through the heavens was run,
On the same couch together they reposed;
And all her thoughts and feelings save the one
Her glowing spirit loved and mused on most,
Were to the Persian maid familiarly disclosed.

LXXX.

This only secret to herself alone
She kept; and if she did but once complain,
Or unawares let fall a sigh or groan,
Straight she disguised it on pretence of pain
For her remembered home: so strict the chain
Of their connexion now was grown, that ne'er
Did mute or maiden offer to restrain
Erminia's access to her, whatsoe'er
Might be the' immediate theme that claimed their Lady's care.

LXXXI.

She came one eve—Clorinda was away,—
Yet pensive she sat down, and inly weighed
Each mode of art by which she might essay
The so-much-wished departure, unbetrayed;
There whilst a thousand thoughts her mind, unstayed
In its designs, revolved, nor could decide
Which to adopt, by the mild light that played
On the white walls, suspended she descried
Clorinda's arms and vest: she saw them and she sighed:

LXXXII.

And sighing, thus exclaimed: "Heroic dame,
How envy I thy fortune! not that thou
Art lovely in thy might,—not for the fame
And vaunt of thy wild beauty, Dearest, no!
But thee no envious cell restrains; no flow
Of cumbrous garments curbs thy steps,—thy weeds
Are of the beaten silver: thou canst go
By night or day where'er thy humour leads;
No fear thy course controls, no bashfulness thy deeds.

LXXXIII.

"Ah, wherefore did not Heaven to me accord
A strength like hers; then might I change the veil
For the plumed helm, the quiver for the sword,
And pall of purple for the shirt of mail:
Then neither thunder, heat, nor hoary hail
Should mew my love within these towers of stone:
But or in open day, or by the pale
Pure planet of the night, would I begone,
Armed, to the Christian camp, attended or alone.

LXXXIV.

"Then thou, accurst Argantes, hadst not fought
First with my lord: I would have sought the plain,
And struck, perhaps a noble conquest wrought,
And hither brought my vassal to sustain,
Forged by revengeful Love, a red-rose chain
Gay as the light, and playful as the air;
Charmed with that fond beguilement of my pain,
I should have felt the bonds he makes me wear,
Sweet for my servant's sake, and passing light to bear.

LXXXV.

"Or else his hand the passage had explored
To my poor heart, and piercing through my breast,
His kindly-cruel and unhindered sword
Had cured the wound his image there impressed:
Then would my weary spirit be at rest;
Perchance the victor, piteous of my doom,
With one kind tear my obsequies had graced;
Raised the lone urn, and o'er my early tomb
Bade the green cypress wave, the' unwithering laurel bloom.

LXXXVI.

"Alas, I dream wild things! what have I said?
My thoughts are in a maze of follies lost;
Shall I then stay, lamenting, yet afraid
To act, like a weak slave or shivering ghost?
I will not! no! mount, spirits, to your post!
My bold heart, fortify my timorous cheek!
Can I not use these arms for once? at most,
It is but a brief hardship that I seek;
Can I not bear their weight, though tender, faint, and weak?

LXXXVII.

"I can; I will; true Love will make me strong,—
Love gives the weakest strength: e'en the tame deer,
Pricked by his kindly heat, to battle throng
In antlered vigour, without care or fear:
I have no wish indeed with helm or spear
To war, like them; but only, by their rape,
Like my beloved Clorinda to appear;
If I of her but take the armed shape,
Beneath the pleasant fraud I make my sure escape.

LXXXVIII.

"The warders will not dare but ope for her
The portal-gates, and a free pass allow;
I think again.....no other means occur;
This method only can avail my vow.
O, gentle Love! in this sharp need, do thou
Favour my flight, as thou inspir'st my wit;
And Fortune, stand benignant! even now
Prove I your power,—this is the time most fit,
Whilst yet Clorinda's cares the masked attempt permit."

LXXXIX.

Thus, fixed was her resolve; delay was none;
By the rash fervour of her passion swayed,
From her friend's near apartment to her own,
Clorinda's arms she secretly conveyed,—
For at her entrance each attendant maid
Retired, and she remained alone; whilst Night,
Blind patroness of thefts and frolics played
By gentle lovers, favourer of her flight,
Rose o'er the silent world, and hid the spoils from sight.

XC.

She, when she saw the bloom of sunset fade,
And Love's pale star put forth its sparkling fire,
No moment of her precious time delayed,
But sent a secret summons for her squire,
And for her favourite maid, in whose entire
Devotion to her person she reposed
Implicit trust: to them her strong desire
To quit the' invested city she disclosed;
But feigned that other cause the timeless step imposed.

XCI.

Quick was the squire, and active to provide
What for the journey he conceived was meet;
Whilst young Erminia laid her vests aside,
That hung for pomp below her graceful feet;
And to her flowered cymar disrobed complete,
Never did virgin bride a shape display
So elegantly slender; charms so sweet
Surpass the power of fancy to portray:
Prompt stands the favourite maid her Lady to array.

XCII.

The hard cold steel oppresses and offends
Her delicate smooth neck and golden hair;
Her arm, unequal to the burden, bends
Beneath the huge shield she aspires to bear:
Armed, the bright Virgin cast a dazzling glare,
And fashioned her nice step and aspect mild
To a proud stride and military air;
Love near her clapped his little wings, and smiled,
As when in female weeds Alcides he beguiled.

XCIII.

Oh, how fatiguing every moment grew
The' unequal weight! how slow her faltering pace!
Faint to her handmaid for support she drew,
And by her help moved onward a short space;
But Love renews her spirits, bright hopes brace
Her sinews strengthening as her fear abates;
So that at length they reach the chosen place,
Where the mute Squire for their arrival waits,
Vault on their steeds, and seek at once the guarded gates.

XCIV.

Disguised they went, the least-frequented ways
Selecting well; yet passed they many a band
Of soldiers under arms, and saw the blaze
Of bickering armour flash on every hand;
But none of those they met with, durst withstand
Their uncommissioned progress, nor presume
E'en to require the signal of command;
Awed they passed on, for through the evening gloom
All knew the silver arms and dreaded tigress plume.

XCV.

Erminia, though this homage had dispersed
The strongest of her doubts, was ill at ease;
Still for her bold design she feared the worst;
And heard discovery sound in every breeze.
But now the portals of the town she sees;
Checks her alarm, and in commanding state
Boldly confronts the keeper of the keys:
"For Aladine!" she cries, "unbar the gate!
Heave the portcullis up! the hour is waxing late."

XCVI.

Her female tone and form give added power
To the masked fraud; (for who would think to see
Armed and in saddle, at so dusk an hour,
A gentle lady of her high degree?)
So that the guard obeys at once, and she,
With the two pressed attendants that partake
Her flight, proceeds; for full security
Resolved to thread the vales, by bush and brake
Gliding in noiseless stealth, long winding tracks they take.

XCVII.

But when Erminia saw herself at last
Deep in the lonely vales, she curbed her steed;
For her first peril she accounted past,—
And well aware that she had now no need
For apprehension, gave attentive heed
To the still voice of prudence, which, she grieved,
Had been in her desire's impetuous speed
Passed by unheard: her access she perceived
Would prove more hard to win, than she at first believed.

XCVIII.

She now perceived the folly of a flight
In borrowed arms amid her angry foes;
Nor, on the other hand, till to the knight
She came, would she her rank or name disclose;
But, secret and reserved as the moss-rose
In its enfolding leaves, would first acquire
Pledge of deserved reception; whence she goes
More gently o'er the grass, and her desire,
Lowered to cool caution's key, thus trusts to her sure squire.

XCIX.

"My faithful servant! thee have I designed
For my precursor; but be swift and wise:
Haste to the camp, and some auxiliar find
To introduce thee where Prince Tancred lies;
Him of my coming tranquilly apprise:
Say, 'That a pitying lady comes to pour
Oil in his wounds, and on his grace relies
For peace, whom warring Love has wounded sore;
So may our mutual gifts our mutual ease restore!

C.

"'One, who on him does such full trust repose,
That in his hands she fears nor wrong nor scorn:'
This only—to his private ear disclose,
And if he wishes aught beside to learn,
Tell nothing, nothing know, but straight return;
I (for the spot a sense of safety brings)
Will meanwhile in the valley make sojourn:"
This said, her faithful herald forward springs;
And scours the vale as though endued with actual wings.

CI.

With such a dexterous skill his aim he wrought,
He won the jealous sentries, passed them clear,
And to the warrior on his couch was brought,
Who heard the message with delighted ear.
Left to himself, the' astonished cavalier
Lay full of thought, and in his fancy weighed
A thousand doubtful things, by hope and fear
At once possessed: the answer which he made
Was, that she safe might come, and secret as the shade.

CII.

But she meanwhile impatient, in whose eyes
Each moment seemed an age, to care a prey,
Counts to herself each separate step, and cries,
"Now he arrives, now speaks, now hastes away;"
Next she upbraids his indolent delay;
Chides his unusual want of diligence;
And, weary grown of his eternal stay,
Spurs till she gains the nearest eminence,
Whence her dilating eye discerns the distant tents.

CIII.

On high were the clear stars; the gentle Hours
Walked cloudless through the galaxy of space,
And the calm moon rose, lighting up the flowers
With frost of living pearl: like her in grace,
The' enamoured maid from her illumined face
Reflected light where'er she chanced to rove;
And made the silent Spirit of the place,
The hills, the melancholy moon above,
And the dumb valleys round, familiars of her love.

CIV.

Seeing the Camp, she whispered; "O ye fair
Italian tents! how amiable ye show!
The breathing winds that such refreshment bear,
Ravish my soul, for 't is from you they blow!
So may relenting Heaven on me bestow,—
On me, by froward Fate so long distressed,—
A chaste repose from weariness and woe,
As in your compass only lies my quest;
As 't is your arms alone can give my spirit rest.

CV.

"Receive me then, and in you let me find
Love's gentle voice, which spoke of pity, true;
And that delightful music of the mind,
Which in my blest captivity I drew
From my lord's mercy; patronised by you,
I have no wish to re-obtain and wear
My regal crown,—adieu, vain pomps, adieu!
Enough for me if Tancred grants my prayer;
More blest in you to serve, than reign a queen elsewhere.

CVI.

Ah, little does she think, while thus she dreams,
What is prepared for her by Fortune's spite!
She is so placed, that the moon's placid beams
In line direct upon her armour light;
So far remote into the shades of night
The silver splendour is conveyed, and she
Surrounded is with brilliancy so bright,
That whosoe'er might chance her crest to see,
Would of a truth conclude it must Clorinda be.

CVII.

And, as Fate willed, close couched in the high fern,
In stations due of distance interposed,
Two brave Italian brothers, Polypherne,
And, paramount, Alcander, had disposed
Full fifty youths, the flower of Tancred's host,
To intercept the Saracens' supply
Of flocks and herds from the Arabian coast;
Erminia's servant but escaped their eye
By his long winding track, and speed in gliding by.

CVIII.

Watchful young Polypherne, whose aged sire
Before his eyes Clorinda lately slew,
Saw the white arms, the feminine attire,
And the charged helmet for Clorinda's knew;
Rash and unguarded in his wrath, he drew
His urged attendants from the covert near;
And, as on fire for vengeance forth he flew,
Shouted aloud, "'Tis well; death waits thee here!"
And lanced, but lanced in vain, his formidable spear.

CIX.

As when a hind, inflamed with fervid thirst
Seeking the cool refreshing fountains, sees
A clear spring gushing from a crag, or burst
Of some cascade o'erbowered with leafy trees,—
If, while she thinks to taste the shade at ease,
And quaff the waves up that so sweetly roar,
The hunter's horn, sounds shrilly in the breeze,
Back, back she rushes, nor remembers more
The faintness, thirst, and heat, that fired her limbs before

CX.

So she, who thought in Tancred's pure embrace
To quench the love which she began to find
Inflame her heart, and, anchored on his grace,
To woo repose to her so weary mind,
Hearing the clang of weapons on the wind,
And the loud menace of the hunters armed
To thwart her pleasures, tremblingly resigned
Thought of the joy that wooed, the wish that warmed,
And spurred her courser back, distracted and alarmed.

CXI.

Away the Princess flies, her snorting steed
Trampling with swift intelligential feet
The echoing soil; with imitative speed
Flies too her handmaid, while with steps less fleet
The troop pursue; and now the squire discreet
With his untimely tidings comes in sight
Of the pale maid, perceives her in retreat,
And, pressed, participates her dubious flight;
Wide o'er the plains they speed, diversely driven by fright.

CXII.

But the more wise Alcander, though he too
Had the same counterfeit Clorinda seen,
Would not the already challenged maid pursue,
But kept still close within his leafy screen;
And sent to say, that through the valleys green
Nor fleecy sheep had passed, nor lowing steer;
And that no foe had intercepted been,
But strong Clorinda, who in panic fear
Fled from his brother's call and close pursuing spear:

CXIII.

And that he could not reasonably conceive
That she, the Lady Chieftain of the land,
Not a mere warrioress, would choose to leave
The town at such an hour, but on some grand
And hardy enterprise, for mischief planned
Against the camp; yet, ere he shifted thence,
He looked for Godfrey's counsel or command;
The scout that brought the news of these events,
Passing, divulged it first amid the' Italian tents.

CXIV.

Tancred, who yet had scarce the doubts allayed
Raised by the message which the Syrian bore,
Thinks, what if for my sake the courteous maid
Risks her dear life! ah, what if all be o'er!
He leaps from off his couch, assumes no more
Than half his arms, in still and secret haste
Climbs to his steed, the strange event to' explore,
And, following the clear footmarks freshly traced,
Glides like a shooting star across the moonbright waste.

CANTO VII.

Stanza cvii.

ARGUMENT.

A HOSPITABLE shepherd entertains
Forlorn Erminia; her undaunted knight
Seeking the frighted damsel, in the trains
Of false Armida, is entrapped by sleight.
Raymond with proud Argantes dares the fight,
And gains an Angel for his guard; betrayed
By rage to deepest risk, in helpless plight
The Pagan stands, till Belzebub, in aid,
Blends the two gazing hosts in uproar, storm, and shade.

I.

THROUGH the brown shade of forests ivied o'er
With age, meanwhile, divine Erminia fled;
Her trembling hand the bridle ruled no more;
And she appeared betwixt alive and dead.
The steed that bore her with the' instinctive dread
Of danger, at its own wild mercy, through
Such winding paths and bosky mazes sped,
That it at length quite rapt her from the view;
Baffling the eager hopes of those that would pursue.

II.

As when, after some long and toilsome chase,
The hounds return, a sad and panting train,
Leaving the prey it mocks their skill to trace,
Lodged in some thicket from the open plain;
So, full of shame, resentment and disdain,
Their far pursuit the weary knights resigned;
Yet still the timid Virgin fled amain
Through the drear woods, disconsolate of mind,
Nor once looked back to mark if yet they pressed behind.

III.

All night she fled; and all the day succeeding,
Still without guidance or reflection, flies
O'er dale and hill, nought listening to, or heeding,
But her own tears, but her own mournful cries;
Till now, what time the sun, descending, dyes
The clouds with crimson, leaving earth in shade,
Fair Jordan's lucid current she descries;
There first her steed's bewildered step she stayed;
Her bed the chill green bank, her bower the wild woods made.

IV.

Repast she yet had none; her only diet
The food that sorrow from remembrance brings;
But Sleep at length, pain's balm, and care's sweet quiet,
O'er her closed eyes displays his brooding wings;
Seals with his opiate rod the many springs
Of thought, and in serene oblivion steeps
Her sense of grief: but forms of visioned things
Disturb her fluttering spirit whilst she sleeps,—
Still Fancy's pictured porch unsilenced Passion keeps.

V.

She slept, till in her dreaming ear, the bowers
Whispered, the gay birds warbled of the dawn;
The river roared; the winds to the young flowers
Made love; the blithe bee wound its dulcet horn:
Roused by the mirth and melodies of morn,
Her languid eyes she opens, and perceives
The huts of shepherds on the lonely lawn;
Whilst seeming voices, 'twixt the waves and leaves
Call back her scattered thoughts,—again she sighs and grieves.

VI.

Her plaints were silenced by soft music, sent
As from a rural pipe, such sounds as cheer
The Syrian shepherd in his summer tent,
And mixed with pastoral accents, rude but clear.
She rose; and gently, guided by her ear,
Came where an old man on a rising ground
In the fresh shade, his white flocks feeding near,
Twig-baskets wove, and listened to the sound
Trilled by three blooming boys, who sate disporting round.

VII.

They at the shining of her silver arms
Were seized at once with wonder and despair;
But sweet Erminia soothed their vain alarms,
Discovering her dove's eyes, and golden hair.
"Follow," she said, "dear innocents, the care
Of favouring Heaven, your fanciful employ!
For the so formidable arms I bear,
No cruel warfare bring, nor harsh annoy,
To your engaging tasks, to your sweet songs of joy.

VIII.

"But, Father, say, whilst the destructive fire
Of war lays waste the country wide and far,
How live you free from military ire,
Beneath the charm of what benignant star?"
"My son," said he, "from the rude wrongs of war
My family and flocks in this lone nook
Were ever safe; no fears my quiet mar;
These groves to the hoarse trumpet never shook;
Calm rolls yon stately stream, calm flows each woodland brook.

IX.

"Whether it be that Heaven protects in love
The chaste humility of shepherd swains,
Or, as its lightnings strike the crag's tall grove,
But leave untouched the roses of the plains,—
That so the wrath of foreign swords disdains
To harm the meek heads of the lowly poor,
Aiming alone at lofty kings,—our gains
Tempt not the greedy soldier to our door;
Safe stands our simple shed, despised our little store.

X.

"Despised by others, but so dear to me,
That gems and crowns I hold in less esteem;
From pride, from avarice is my spirit free,
And mad ambition's visionary dream.
My thirst I quench in the pellucid stream,
Nor fear lest poison the pure wave pollutes;
With flocks my fields, my fields with herbage teem;
My garden-plot supplies nutritious roots;
And my brown orchard bends with Autumn's wealthiest fruits.

XI.

"Few are our wishes, few our wants; Man needs
But little to preserve the vital spark:
These are my sons; they keep the flock that feeds,
And rise in the grey morning with the lark.
Thus in my hermitage I live; now mark
The goats disport amid the budding brooms;
Now the slim stags bound through the forest dark;
The fish glide by; the bees hum round the blooms;
And the birds spread to heaven the splendour of their plumes.

XII.

"Time was (these grey hairs then were golden locks),
When other wishes wantoned in my veins;
I scorned the simple charge of tending flocks,
And fled disgusted from my native plains.
Awhile in Memphis I abode, where reigns
The mighty Caliph; he admired my port,
And made me keeper of his flower-domains;
And though to town I rarely made resort,
Much have I seen and known of the intrigues of court.

XIII.

"Long by presumptuous hopes was I beguiled,
And many, many a disappointment bore;
But when with youth false hope no longer smiled,
And the scene palled that charmed so much before,—
I sighed for my lost peace, and brooded o'er
The' abandoned quiet of this humble shed;
Then, farewell State's proud palaces! once more
To these delightful solitudes I fled;
And in their peaceful shades harmonious days have led."

XIV.

This his discourse so sweetly did subdue
The secret sorrows of the listening maid,
Each word, descending to her heart like dew,
The feverish passion of her soul allayed:
That, when the measure she had inly weighed—
Her present peace, and her so late dismay,—
She stood resolved within the silent shade
Of these sweet solitudes, at least to stay,
Till for her safe return kind Heaven might smooth the way

XV.

And thus replied: "Oh fortunate and wise!
Who hast thyself experienced, nor forgot
The ills of cruel fortune! if the skies
Be nothing jealous of thy blissful lot,
Pity my woes, and to this pleasant spot
Deign to receive me, stung with sorrow's smart;
In the safe shelter of thy welcome cot
And these still shades, I may perhaps in part
Lose the oppressive weight that hangs around my heart!

XVI.

"And, if what crowds fall down to and adore
As idols, gold and jewels, thou shouldst prize,
Rich e'en in ruin, I have here a store
That well thine utmost wishes may suffice."
Then, showering from her bright benignant eyes
Tears like those dropt from heaven's resplendent bow,
Part of her history she told: with sighs
And tears, in concord with her own that flow,
The pitying shepherd heard the narrative of woe:

XVII.

And straight, with all a father's love and zeal,
He took her to his heart, soothed her distress,
And to his wife, whose heart alike could feel
For others' sorrows, led the fair Princess.
Her arms she changes for a pastoral dress,
And with rude ribbon binds her dainty hair;
Yet still, her graceful manner of address,
Movement of eyes and steps the truth declare,—
Was never woodland girl so delicately fair!

XVIII.

Those rustic weeds hid not the princely fire
And grandeur so instinctively her own;
In every action through her quaint attire,
The latent spirit of the Lady shone;
Whether she drove her flocks to range alone
The thymy down, or penned them in the fold;
Or to wild ditties sung in mournful tone,
The dulcet cream in churns revolving rolled,
Till firm the fluid fixed, and took the tinge of gold.

XIX.

Oft when her flocks, from summer's noontide rays,
Lay in cool shades o'erarched by gadding vines,
She carved on beeches and immortal bays
Her Tancred's name, and left the mossy pines
With sad inscriptions flourished, silent signs
Of the unhappy flame her fancy fed;
And when again she saw her own fond lines,
As she the melancholy fragments read,
Fresh tears of grief unchecked her lovely eyes would shed;

XX.

And weeping she would say; "For ever be,
O ye dear trees, historians of my woe!
That when two faithful lovers rest, like me,
In the cool shade your verdant boughs bestow,
Their hearts with generous sympathy may glow;
And, as this volume of my griefs they view,
Say to themselves, 'Ah, never may we know
Her pangs, poor maid! 'tis hard a love so true
Should be so ill repaid by Love and Fortune too!'

XXI.

"Perhaps, if Heaven benignly hears the vow
And prayer affectionate of girls unblest,
He who cares nothing for Erminia now,
May wander to these woods, where buried rest
Her virgin relics, early dispossessed
Of life's pure fire,—may, glancing on my grave,
White with spring's voilets, beat his manly breast,
And to my griefs—the first he ever gave—
Yield a few gracious tears, too late, alas, to save!

XXII.

"Thus, though in life most miserable, in death
Bliss to my spirit shall at least arise;
And my cold ashes, quickened by his breath,
Enjoy what now my evil star denies."
Whilst thus, the tears fast streaming from her eyes,
To the deaf trees she talked in fondest phrase,
The' unconscious object of her plaintive cries,
As chance or froward fortune guides him, strays
In search of her, far-off, through dark and dreary ways.

XXIII.

Following the impress of her horse's hoof,
He reached the neighbouring wood; there brier and fern
So choked the way, and from its leafy roof
The chequered shade grew momently so stern,
That he no more could 'mid the trees discern
The recent prints, but through the gloom profound
Wandered perplexed; at almost every turn
Listening if, chance, from the deep glens around,
Of arms or trampling steeds his ear might catch the sound.

XXIV.

And if but the night breeze in beech or oak
Shook the still leaves, if but a timid bird
Sped through the rustling boughs, from slumber woke,
Or fiercer creature in the thicket stirred,
To the vague murmur instantly he spurred;
At length he issued from the wood's blind maze,
And to a noise mysterious, which he heard
Remote—beneath the yellow moon's bright rays,
Rode, till he held the cause subjected to his gaze.

XXV.

A steep he reached, where from the living stone
Fell in full streams a beautiful cascade;
Which, curbed into a flood, went roaring on,
And the whole valley like a garden made.
Here he his fruitless steps dejected stayed;
He called—but Echo of his eager cries
Made mockery, vocal from the greenwood shade—
None else; meanwhile he saw—with tranquil eyes,
Blooming with white and red the new Aurora rise.

XXVI.

He sighed, he stormed, he angrily repined,
And of his disappointment Heaven accused;
But deepest vengeance vowed, if he should find
That the dear maid had been at all abused.
Back to the Camp at length, when he had mused
What step to take, his course he fixed to steer,
Although the way was dubious and confused;
For well he knew the stated time drew near,
When he again should fight the' Egyptian cavalier.

XXVII.

Through many a winding path as he advanced,
He heard the sound of hoofs; nor was it long,
Ere up the narrow vale in prospect, pranced
One, courier-like, who shook a waving thong;
Gay at his side by chains of silver hung
An ivory horn, in our Italian mode
Across his shoulders negligently slung;
Tancred of him inquired the nearest road
To Godfrey's camp, which strait the ready stranger showed:

XXVIII.

Adding in Tuscan; "Thither am I bent,
By Bohemond's command;" the knight, this heard,
Deemed him his uncle's post, and with him went,
In full reliance on his guileful word.
They came at length to where, alike unstirred
By breeze or storm, a stagnant lake embayed
A castle; huge the pile its waters gird:
On the dark towers the sun one moment played,
Then sudden sank to sea, and left the world in shade.

XXIX.

Arrived, the courier blew his signal horn,
Instant a drawbridge fell athwart the fosse;
"Sir Knight," he said, "thou here canst rest till morn,
If Frank thou art, or follower of the Cross;
These towers Cosenza's Earl, with little loss,
Three days since wrested from the Turk:" the knight
Gazed on the antique structure—grey with moss,
Gloomy, yet grand it showed, of giant height,
Nobly defenced by art, impregnable in site.

XXX.

A pile so strong, concealed, he was afraid,
Some secret treason or malignant charm;
But, to all risks accustomed, he betrayed
Neither by sound nor sign the least alarm:
For well he trusted in his own right arm,
Where'er by choice or Fortune led, to make
Terms of complete security from harm;
But, pledged already, and his fame at stake,
No fresh adventure now he cared to undertake.

XXXI.

Before the Castle, where in the green lea
The drawbridge ceased to span the sullen tide,
He therefore paused; nor would persuaded be
To follow o'er the flood his wily guide.
But now an armed warrior he descried
On the pontoon of fierce and scornful mien;
Sublime his stature, haughty was his stride;
In his right hand a naked sword was seen,
And thus he spake in terms decisive, stern, and keen.

XXXII.

"Oh thou whom choice conducts, or fortune charms
To tread, beguiled, Armida's fatal lands!
Think not of flight; strip off those idle arms,
And to her chains submit thine abject hands.
Free to thy feet her guarded palace stands,
The bliss to taste, the fëalty to swear,
Which she to others offers, and commands:
Look not to see heaven's sunshine more, whate'er
May be thy youth of years, or hoariness of hair;—

XXXIII.

"Unless thou swear her edicts to enforce,
And with her other slaves to death pursue
All Christ's detested sons:" at this discourse
The knight regarded him, on closer view,
The arms and accents recognised, and knew
Rambaldo for his foe—the Gascon base,
Who with Armida from the camp withdrew,
Pagan became, and here to his disgrace,
Maintained the evil rules and customs of the place.

XXXIV.

The pious warrior blushed with holy scorn,
And answered; "Curst apostate! know that I
That Tancred am, who aye for Christ have borne
The warrior's weapon on my martial thigh.
Strong in His strength, his rebels I defy,
And tame; as thou, if thou but enterprise
Thy sword with mine, shalt surely testify;
For the just anger of the' insulted skies
Has chosen this strong right hand thy treason to chastise."

XXXV.

Aghast at mention of his glorious name
Stood the false knight, but cloaked his fear, and said;
"Ill-starred the hour when to these shores you came,
In Eblis' halls to join the silent dead!
Here shall thy crest be shorn, thy spirits shed
To the last drop thy heart's blood will I spill,
And to your Captain send that haughty head,
In gift of grace, if but my prowess still
Be, what it ever was, consistent with my will."

XXXVI.

Whilst thus the Pagan spoke, the shades of night
Shut up their view; when swift, around, on high,
Cressets, and lamps, and urns of golden light
Filled the dusk element with brilliancy:
Gay shone the Castle to the' enchanted eye,
As in a theatre the shifted scene,
When gorgeous Tragedy sweeps sceptred by;
And in her lofty latticed bower, the Queen
Unmarked spectatress sate, and smiled behind her screen.

XXXVII.

Meanwhile the Christian Chief begins to fit
His arms and courage to the coming fight,
Nor on his feeble courser will he sit,
His foe on foot, but generously alight.
The foe comes covered with his buckler; bright
The helmet glitters on his head, and bare
Shines his raised scimetar in act to smite;
'Gainst him the Prince too flies, his worst to dare,
Like thunder sounds his voice, his eyes like lightnings glare.

XXXVIII.

That, in wide circles wheels averse, in strict
Defence of art, feigns, motions, falsifies;
This though late wounds and faintness sore afflict,
With bold impatience the near conflict plies;
And when his foe draws back, in quick surprise
Springs with the utmost speed he can command,
To intercept, or smite him as he flies;
Whilst ever and anon his active hand
To the unguarded face directs its flashing brand.

XXXIX.

With yet more eagerness the Prince assails
The vital parts, and every stroke he deals
Quits with high threats; the Gascon's courage fails,
His ears ring inward, and his blood congeals:
Now here, now there in panic fear he wheels,
Lithe and alert as an assaulted snake;
With live eye circumspect his blows he steals;
And now with sword, now shield, essays to make
The knight's impetuous steel a slant direction take.

XL.

But he to ward off harm is not so swift
As that fierce foe is active to assail;
Battered his helm, his shield 's already cleft,
And bored and bloody is his plated mail.
Of Tancred's meditated blows, none fail
Of their effect, not one descends in vain;—
Each keenly wounds; the renegade turns pale,
And his heart writhes at once beneath the pain
Of anger, pride remorse, love, conscience, and disdain.

XLI.

On one last effort of despairing pride
Resolved at length his dying hopes to set,
He casts the fragment of his shield aside,
Grasps with both hands his sword, unerinsoned yet,
And closing nimbly with his foe, to get
The full command and vantage of the ground,
Quits with so sharp a stroke his heavy debt,
That through both plate and mail the flesh it found,
And in the warior's side impressed a grisly wound.

XLII.

Next on his spacious brows he struck,—the steel
Like an alarm-bell rang; a stroke so dire
And unexpected made the warrior reel
Some paces back, yet left the helm entire.
Red grew the Prince's cheeks for very ire;
In agony of shame his teeth he gnashed;
His eyes were like two coals of living fire,
And every glance that through his visor flashed,
Blasted the Gascon's pride, both blasted and abashed.

XLIII.

He heard the hissing of the Avenger's steel,
Brandished aloft; its shining he descried;
Already in his breast he seemed to feel
The' accelerated sword his heart divide,
And tremblingly recoiled; the blow fell wide
On an antique pilaster that embossed
The marble bridge,—sparks flashed on every side,
Fragments sprang forth and in the skies were lost:
Whilst to the traitor's heart fear shot its arrowy frost.

XLIV.

Back to the bridge he rushed, in speed reposing
His hopes of life,—behind, the' Avenger hung
On his fleet steps, now near, now nearer closing,
One hand already to his shoulder clung;
When lo! from trembling air the lights are wrung;
The cressets disappear; the tapers die;—
Gone was each star that in blue ether hung;
The yellow moon drew in her horns on high;
And all grew hideous shade beneath the vacant sky.

XLV.

Through the thick glooms of witchcraft and of night
Nought could the Prince distinguish to pursue;
Still he pressed on, though ignorant if aright,
His steps confused and dubious as his view:
Bewildered thus, he to the portals drew,
By evil chance the threshold he passed o'er,
And of his fatal entrance nothing knew,
Till hoarse behind, with repercussive roar,
The sullen hinge flew back, and locked the closing door.

XLVI.

As from our seas to the Comachian bay,
Urged by the fury of the driving tide,
The vext fish joys to cleave its wanton way
Where calm and smooth the silent waters glide,
And locks itself unconsciously inside
The marshy gaol; nor finds, till it would dart
Back to the ocean, all escape denied;
For the strange estuary, with curious art,
To all free access yields, but lets not one depart:

XLVII.

So Tancred there (such artful springs involved
The wizard work of that mysterious den),
Entered with ease, but found, on flight resolved,
No human foot might pass its walls again.
He shook the massy gate with might and main;
The lock essayed; the brazen hinges tried;
But found the effort void, the project vain:
"In vain," a loud voice in the distance cried,
"Seek'st thou to flee from hence, lorn thrall of queen Armide!

XLVIII.

"Here thou, thus livingly entombed, shalt waste
(Fear not for death) thy days and years alone:"
The hardy knight replied not, but compressed
Within his heart affliction's rising groan.
Love inly he accused,—love, fate, his own
Small wit, and his false guide's deceptions fell;
"'T is not," he murmured in desponding tone,
"'T is not to bid the cheerful sun farewell
Can make my heart with grief or proud resentment swell.

XLIX.

"That were small suffering; but I lose, alas,
Of a diviner sun the lovelier grace!
Ignorant if e'er these gates I shall repass,
Or e'er again the blissful sight embrace
Of my love's stately form and radiant face:"
Therewith the image of Argantes came,
And deepened his distress; "O dire disgrace!"
He cried; "with too just cause will he defame
My truth; alas the' affront! the fixt eternal shame!"

L.

Whilst love, whilst honour thus his spirit stings,
Nor peace, nor rest the fierce Argantes knows
On his soft pillow; from the couch he springs,
And such his scorn of indolent repose,
Such lust for glory in his bosom glows,
That though his former wounds are yet unsealed,
And twinge him still with intermittent throes,
He burns to see the sixth day-dawn revealed,
And hear the trumpet sing his summons to the field.

LI.

Scarce could the Paynim rest the previous night,
Scarce close an eyelid; restless with desire,
He rose whilst heaven was starry, long ere light
Had touched the mountain-peaks with ruddy fire;
And "Bring my arms!" he shouted to his squire,—
His ready arms the active servant brought;
Not those he wont to wear, but bright attire
Of plate, which Aladine had late besought
The man to' accept, with skill and wondrous labour wrought

LII.

He takes them, little curious of their pride,
Not ill his limbs the weighty burden bear:
And last, his wonted sabre to his side
He girds, of purest steel, antique and rare.
As with its bloody locks let loose in air,
Horribly bright, the Comet shows whose shine
Plagues the parched world, whose looks the nations scar
Before whose face states change, and powers decline,
To purple Tyrants all an inauspicious sign,—

LIII.

So in his arms he sparkled, and askance
His eyes, with blood and rage inebriate, rolled;
A mortal menace shown in every glance,
Nor of his vassals was there one so bold
As trembled not sincerely, to behold
His face of horror, and the scorn displayed
In fierce gesticulations: in his hold
He strained, he raised, he shook his naked blade,
Wounding the empty air and unessential shade.

LIV.

"Right soon," he cried, "shall the vain-glorious wretch
That in close fight with me presumed to stand,
Faint at my feet his bleeding carcase stretch,
And soil his flowing tresses in the sand.
Yet shall he live to see my conquering hand,
Despite his baffled God, triumphant tear
His arms away, shall with entreaties bland
Beg me, but vainly beg, his limbs to spare,
Vowed to the growling dogs, and griffins of the air!"

LV.

E'en as a bull, that, stung with hot desire,
Horribly roars, and with his roaring shakes
The nodding groves, thus cherishing his ire,
Till anger burns, and all the brute awakes;
He whets his horns against the oaks, and makes
As he to battle would the winds invite
With empty strokes; then from the thicket breaks,
And spurns the yellow sands with hoofs that cite
The rival of his love, far-off, to mortal fight.

LVI.

With such blind fury moved, Argantes sent
To call the herald, and abruptly cried,
"Go to the Camp, and bid, in Godfrey's tent,
The Christian champion fiercely be defied!"
For none he waits, but with impatient pride
Vaults to his saddle, and commands to lead
The conquered Otho fettered at his side;
Then, issuing from the town, his snorting steed
Spurs down the vales in rash and unrelaxing speed:

LVII.

He blew his hollow horn,—the startling sound
Rolled o'er the hills in echoes far away,
And like the thunder the dark storm flings round,
Filled both the ear and spirit with dismay.
Soon within Godfrey's tent in fair array
The Christian knights were met; his haughty claim
The herald made,—with all his challenge lay,
But Tancred he distinguished first by name,
Then on insulting heel turned back to whence he came.

LVIII.

In deep suspense, with slow and serious glance,
Godfrey contemplated each chief and knight;
Long grew his gaze, yet would not one advance
To undertake the formidable fight.
His bravest Chiefs were wanting to his sight,—
Tidings were none of Tancred, since the hour
Of his alarm and surreptitious flight,
Bohemond far, and self-exiled the flower
Of all his force, the knight who quelled Gernando's power.

LIX.

Whilst yet, beside the chance-elected ten,
His most experienced, most renowned in wars
Following had joined Armida's subject train,
Beneath the favour of the midnight stars;
The rest, coy favourites of a feebler Mars,
Though blushing for the fault, stood mute and tame;
None cared at such a risk to purchase scars,
Though with sure promise of a glorious fame,
So much their sense of fear o'erpowered their sense of shame.

LX.

In their long silence, in their looks, too plain
In every sign he traced the thoughts that scare
Their timid souls; and with sublime disdain
Upstarting sudden from his ducal chair,
Said: "Most unworthy should I be to bear
Life, O my Peers, if, raised to this high post,
That life to hazard I should now forbear,
Leaving it in a Pagan's power to boast,
He under-foot had trod the honour of our host.

LXI.

"Sit still my knights, and safe from all alarms
View at your perfect ease the risk I run;
Bring me my arms, Sigero, bring my arms!"
Decisively he spoke, and it was done.
But Raymond, who from ripe old age had won
Like ripe discretion and consistent thought,
Whose strength, still verdant, was surpassed by none
In that assembly, better counsels brought,
Stood forth, turned to his Chief, and turning, thus besought.

LXII.

"Ah no, my Prince! stake not the lives of all
Upon the hazard of thine own! look round;
No simple soldier art thou; shouldst thou fall,
The grief were public, public were the wound:
On thee our Faith and empire rest, renowned
By thy wise rule; on thee it is we build
Our hopes to raze this Babel to the ground:
To others leave the use of sword and shield;
Fight thou by mind alone, alone the sceptre wield.

LXIII.

"I, though bowed down by age, will not refuse
The fight,—let others shrink when Battle rears
His frightful voice,—grey hairs shall not excuse
My spirit, joyful in the strife of spears:
Oh that I were but in my youth of years,
Like you, my gallants, who with downcast eyes
Stand spellbound thus, enslaved by empty fears,
Whom wrath nor shame can influence to chastise
The man who to your teeth all Christendom defies!

LXIV.

"Such as I was when, gazed by all the peers
Of Germany, at Conrad's court I drew
My maiden sword on Leopold the fierce,
Reached his mailed bosom, and at odds o'erthrew!
To spoil a warrior brave as him I slew,
Was sure a deed that claims superior praise
Than here, unarmed, unaided, to subdue,
Put to foul flight, and singly hold in chase,
Whole herds of foes like these, superlatively base.

LXV.

"If still that vigour braced my limbs austere,
I had by this time quelled that haughty foe;
Old as I am, I am too young to fear,
Nor is my blood all frozen in its flow;
And, if it be my fate to be laid low,
Whilst my soul burns in brightness to the last,
Home with content my Victor shall not go!
Arm then I will; this brilliant day shall cast
Light over all my track, and shame the lustre past."

LXVI.

Thus spoke the sage: his words like spurs awake
Their slumbering worth, that they who late were dumb
And timid, now brave show of courage make,
And loudly clamour for the fight to come:
Not only terror does not now benumb
Their hearts to shun the quarrel, but the prize
Is sought by all, contended for by some;
Baldwin demands it, Guelph, the two bold Guys,
And with Rogero Stephen, with Stephen Gernier vies:

LXVII.

And Pyrrhus, whose praised stratagem betrayed
To Bohemond proud Antioch, forward pressed;
The battle too, for battle well arrayed,
Rosmond, Fitz-raphe, and Everard request,—
All from the sister-kingdoms of the West,
Albion, Ierne, and blue Scotia—lands
Barred from our world by seas that never rest;
With Edward last, divine Gildippe stands,
And each with equal warmth the challenged fight demands.

LXVIII.

But in the good old Count Toulouse is shown
The liveliest ardour and most keen desire;
Armed cap-a-pie he stands, or wants alone
His lucid helm to make the suit entire:
To whom the Chief; "O venerable Sire!
Mirror of ancient zeal, in whom we see,
And seeing, learn the virtues we admire;
Art, honour, discipline, and worth in thee,
Shining with knightly grace, harmoniously agree!

LXIX.

"If but ten more, thine equals in desert,
Of vigorous years, were in my aid combined,
This haughty Babel soon would I subvert,
And spread the Cross from Thulé e'en to Ind:
But be this needless enterprise resigned
To younger champions; for a nobler fight
Reserve thy vigorous arm and ardent mind;
And leave these candidates their names to write,
And in a helmet cast—let chance select the right:—

LXX.

"Or rather, Providence on high, whose will
Fortune and Chance, his ministers, unfold;"
But Raymond in his claim persisted still,
And with the other knights his name enrolled:
In his own helmet rimmed with shining gold,
Godfrey received, and carelessly anew
Mingled the skaken papers; when, behold,
The first chance scroll which thence at ease he drew,
The name of Count Toulouse exhibited to view!—

LXXI.

Loud acclamations follow; none presume
To blame the lot; and Raymond's visage clears,
His hoar trunk seems rebursting into bloom,
Renewed no less in vigour than in years:
Thus the blithe snake when renovated rears
High the gay crest, and proudly in the sun
Blazons its golden coils: the rival Peers,
But Godfrey most, extolled him as he shone,
Promised him sure success, and cheered with praises on.

LXXII.

Then from his side his poignant sword he took,
And giving it to Raymond, said: "This blade
Is that which once the mighty rebel Duke,
Rodolph of Saxony, in battle swayed;
From him by force I took it, and repaid
At the same moment, by a death condign,
A life by thousand crimes notorious made:
In my caress, 't is Victory's surest sign,
Take it, and may it prove as fortunate in thine!"

LXXIII.

Meanwhile, impatient of their long delay,
In fierce derision the Circassian cries;
"Ho, men unmatched! ho, Europe's brave array
Of chiefs! 't is but one man your host defies:
Since on his prowess he so much relies,
Send now your late stern Tancred to the fight;
Or on soft down does he prefer with wise
Consistency to wait, until the night,
Which saved him once before, again shall blind my sight?

LXXIV.

"Send others, if he fears me; band on band,
Horsemen, foot, all, come all, it recks not me,
Since none dares singly meet me hand to hand,
Of all your Barons, thousands though there be.
On to the tottering Town! look up, and see
The Sepulchre where lies the Son adored
Of sweet saint Mary! lo, the path is free!
Why pay ye not your vows, thereto restored?
For what more sapient use reserve you now the sword?"

LXXV.

With such like taunts the savage Pagan lashed
The minds of all; but most his words inflame
The Count Toulouse,—his eyes defiance flashed,
And ill could he endure the' imputed shame:
His courage, stigmatised, more fierce became,
Ground on the whetstone of his wrath; that, freed
From all prevention, a delay so tame
He breaks, and leaps to Aquiline his steed,
Named from the Northern Wind, and like that wind in speed.

LXXVI.

Upon the banks of Tagus was he bred,
Where oft the mothers of those martial steeds,
When with her warmth inspiring Spring has fed
The eager heat which genial instinct breeds,
Mad o'er the mountains, o'er the spacious meads,
Run open-mouthed against the winds of May,
And greedily receive their fruitful seeds;
Whence growing quick, they (singular to say)
Give, when ripe time rolls round, their issue to the day.

LXXVII.

And, to see Aquilino, you would say
None but the sprightly Wind could be his sire,
So instantly his feet cut short the way;
Swift to rush forward, nimble to retire,
And wheel to right and left in narrowest gyre,
Yet leave no print upon the sands he trode,—
Playful, yet proud; though gentle, full of fire;
Such the Count's steed: he, as to war he rode,
Thus with uplifted eyes preferred his prayers to God.

LXXVIII.

"O thou, that to Goliath's brow didst guide,
By Terebinth's sad veil and sanguine spring,
Untutored arms, so that the Scorner died
By the first pebble from a stripling's sling!
Like aid, O Lord! to-day vouchsafe to bring;
That, struck by me, this ruffian with like shame
May vanquished fall to earth; with vigour string
My feeble Age his arrogance to tame,
As feeble Youth of yore the' uncircumcised o'ercame!"

LXXIX.

Thus prayed the noble veteran; and his prayer,
Winged by firm faith and piety sincere,
Soared, naturally as fire ascends in air,
Swifter than thought to the celestial sphere:
The' Eternal Father bent a gracious ear
To the request, and from the' angelic band
That round in glorious sanhedrim appear,
Appointed one in his defence to stand,
And thus restore him safe from foiled Argantes' hand.

LXXX.

The destined Angel to whose charge was given
The guardianship of Raymond, from his prime,
When new and naked to the light of heaven
He first began to run the race of time,—
Soon as the king of the celestial clime
This welcome duty had afresh imposed,
Flew to a crystal rock that soars sublime
Above all height, where of Heaven's total host
The fine refulgent arms from battle are disposed.

LXXXI.

Here does the lance that pierced the' old Serpent lie,
With the pernicious shafts that smite the earth,—
Those shafts, invisible to mortal eye,
That give the horrid plague and fever birth;
And here, suspended with the darts of dearth,
Are hung the writhen bolts, midst pennons furled,
Which turn to deepest dread all human mirth,
When, through the stedfast empyrean hurled,
Cities are ground to dust, and Earthquake rocks the world.

LXXXII.

Here too with chariots, harnessries, and helms,
A dazzling shield of brightest diamond blazed,
Whose sphere might cover half the lands and realms
That lie 'twixt Atlas and the Scythian waste:
Herewith are holy kings and cities chaste
In every age defenced and fortified;
This on his arm the plumed Seraph braced,
Shot down to earth in secret, undescried,
And took his stationed watch by good Count Raymond's side.

LXXXIII.

And now the turbaned Moslem, young and old,
Swarm to the walls; and, such the tyrant's will,
Clorinda with her band moved on to hold,
Firmly conjoined, the midway of the hill.
In order ranged of military skill,
Armed, on the other hand, a Christian force
Like space at ceremonial distance fill;
And to the champions leave a spacious course,
Betwixt both gazing hosts, for every chance resource.

LXXXIV.

Argantes looked—no Tancred could he see,
But the strange figure of an unknown knight,
Who now came up, and "Thank thy stars," said he,
"Absent's the chief for whom thou strain'st thy sight;
Yet vapour not, whilst I the loss requite;
For here I stand, prepared to prove again
The utmost rage and malice of thy might;
As Tancred's substitute I seek the plain,
Or on mine own account the' engagement good maintain."

LXXXV.

At this the Pagan proudly smiled, and said;
"What then does Tancred? where does he abide?
Of late he braved all heaven, and now is fled;
In dancing heels alone can he confide!
But to earth's centre let him flee, or hide
In the deep main; no place shall bar from me
The flying wretch!" "Thou liest," the knight replied,
"To say that he, the' unmatched in fight,—that he
Flies from thy arms: his worth outvalues ten like thee!"

LXXXVI.

Wrathful, the piqued Circassian cut him short:
"Take then his place, the favour I accord;
We shall see shortly how thou wilt support
The rash bravade of that injurious word."
Thus to the tilt they moved; their chargers spurred,
And their long lances to the helm addressed.
Raymond, whose practised arm but rarely erred,
Struck where he aimed, the vizor he impressed,
But shook his rival not, scarce bowed his haughty crest.

LXXXVII.

But fierce Argantes less successful fared,
The lance struck not which rarely failed to wound,
Driven far aslant by the celestial guard,
Whose shield the good old Earl encompassed round.
Grimly the disappointed Pagan frowned,
And bit his lips, and forth wild curses threw:
His faithless spear he snapped against the ground,
And with drawn sword upon his rival flew,
Burning with tenfold rage to try the course anew.

LXXXVIII.

His coal-black steed he urged with all his might,
As butting rams their horned foreheads bow;
But Raymond shunned the' encounter, to the right
Wheeled, and in passing, struck his scowling brow:
Back rushed the Egyptian Cavalier, and now
Back wheeled the Earl with swiftness uncontrolled,
And on his helmet dealt a nobler blow;
But still in vain; the helmet's massy mould
Had all the tempered strength of adamant or gold.

LXXXIX.

The Pagan, weary of such futile play,
To gripe his foe next tries each strong resource;
But he, lest the colossal bulk should weigh
To earth both steed and rider, shuns his force;
Now strikes; now yields; and in his circling course,
As though endued with viewless wings, maintains
The rotatory war; his matchless horse
Obeys each mandate of the fluttering reins;
Nor one false footstep e'er its nimbleness restrains.

XC.

And as the Chief who some strong tower essays
Amid cloud-kissing hills or marshy vales,
Seeks access by a thousand wiles and ways,
So the Earl scans the giant he assails;
And, as no power of his can cleave the scales
That shield his breast, nor all his thousand arts
Shiver the glistening burganet that veils
His brows, he long explores the quilted parts,
And there 'twixt joint and joint his active falchion darts.

XCI.

Those arms, in many points already bored,
Are red with streaming blood, whilst his remain
Untouched, nor from his helmet has the sword
Struck one gay plume, or cut one sparkling chain;
In vain Argantes rages, strikes in vain,
Yet stubbornly toils on, with careless skill;
He fails not, faints not, flags not in his pain,
But doubles every pass,—from erring skill
Deriving fiercer strength, a more impetuous will.

XCII.

After a thousand blows, the Saracine
At last struck one when Raymond was so nigh,
That 't was believed his nimble Aquiline
Could scarcely from its sweeping fury fly;
But not the watchful Seraph of the sky,
In the pure sunshine at his side concealed,
Failed him at need; his arm he stretched on high,
And on his heavenly adamantine shield
Took the pernicious sword, and all its rage repealed.

XCIII.

The sabre broke; for, not with all the charms
Of art, can metals forged by earthly hand,
The unalloyed, imperishable arms
Tempered by heaven's own alchemy, withstand:
In million sparks, minuter than the sand,
Its fragments fell,—the Emir saw them shine—
Nought but the golden hilt was in his hand;
Yet doubted he the fact, nor could divine
What arms his rival bore, so magically fine.

XCIV.

Amazed he stood, and thought the brittle blade
Shivered on Raymond's shield,—so deemed the knight,
Who nothing knew of the celestial aid,
Sent to protect him from the Pagan's might:
And when he saw the' informidable plight
Of the disarmed Circassian, he remained
In doubt if longer he should press the fight;
A vile inglorious laurel he disdained,
Nor could the victory prize by pure advantage gained.

XCV.

"Go seek," he would have said, "another brand,"
But a new thought within his breast arose—
The public cause was trusted to his hand,
And should he fall, he would dishonour those
For whom he fought; thus neither could he close
In shameful fight to win inglorious bays,
Nor Godfrey's honour to vain risks expose;
Whilst thus he stood debating on the case,
Argantes hurled the hilt and pommel in his face;—

XCVI.

And forward spurred, by grappling to o'erwhelm
His gaunt antagonist; the darted blow
Struck fiercely on his bright Tolosan helm,
And bent the battered vizor to his brow.
But he, undiscomposed, wheeled round, and so
Shunning the' encounter, gashed the hand he saw
Stretched out in muscular disdain, as though
To grasp its prey, unsparing as the paw
Of the voracious wolf, or vulture's horny claw.

XCVII.

Now there, now here, the circled sands he spurned;
Then back again wheeled round, now here, now there;
Nor when he spurred abroad, nor when returned,
Did his eye pity, or his falchion spare.
Whate'er he can of strength; of art whate'er;
Whate'er of old disdain or present ire
The knight can muster, he now brings to bear
Against the foe: and with his strong desire
To end the conflict, Heaven and fortune both conspire.

XCVIII.

Fenced in fine arms and in himself, the foe
Yet braves his mighty strokes, from all fears free;
Like a vast ship with shattered sails, whose prow
At random drives upon a stormy sea;
Which, though she bears all Neptune on her lee,
Ribbed round with heart of oak, firm, stubborn, stout,
Starts not a plank, but in proud majesty
Endures the rushing waves, with not a doubt
That her well-timbered frame will ride the tempest out.

XCIX.

Such was thy risk, Argantes! when to aid
Thy cause, the Prince of Air himself addressed;
Straight of a painted cloud the empty shade
He to the figure of a man compressed;
And on the visionary shape impressed
Clorinda's likeness,—the same lively grace,
Rich shining armour, and embroidered vest;
Gave it organic breath, and in the place
Of mind, her well-known voice, demeanour, port, and pace.

C.

To Oradine, a man of matchless skill
In archery, the beauteous Image came,
And whispered: "Prince of shooters! who at will
Canst strike all marks at which thou takest aim,—
Judge what would be our loss, and what our shame,
Should Syria's brave protector thus expire,
And, supercilious in the victor's claim,
By law of arms yon Christian should acquire
His ornamental spoils, and safe to Camp retire!

CI.

"Now prove thy cunning; give thine arrows wing;
And quick and sure let the Frank villain bleed;
Beside the' eternal glory of the thing,
Expect rewards proportioned to the deed."
Charmed with the promise of the future meed,
The' unhesitating Traitor smiled assent;
Then from his weighty quiver snatched a reed,
Its notch adapted to the bowstring, bent
With ease the tough yew bow, and prophesied the' event.

CII.

Twangs the tense cord, and with a whistling sound
The feathered arrow flies its mark to win;
Aimed where the decorated belt clasps round
The hero's waist, it strikes, and enters in:
Cleaves the rich buckles: cleaves the armour thin,
And dyes its point with blood; there, short of fate,
It stays, just piercing through the tender skin;
For the prompt Angel did its force abate,
Nor let the eager steel too deeply pierce the plate.

CIII.

The blood spun largely from the wounded vein,
Soon as the Count essayed the shaft to draw;
And, filled with generous anger and disdain,
He chid the Pagan for the breach of law:
Godfrey, who could not his charmed eyes withdraw
A single instant from his much-loved knight,
Moved with the liveliest indignation, saw
The flying shaft, and knowing not how slight
The' inflicted puncture was, grew pale with sore affright.

CIV.

With hand and tongue at once alarum sounding,
He urged his knights to see the wrong redressed;
Then were seen vizors closing, war-barbs bounding,
Tight bridles slacked, and lances laid in rest.
So instantly both hosts to battle pressed,
Their course was finished as it seemed begun:
Sands, stamped to dust, the vanished space confessed,
Which, whirled in breezy billows, dense and dun,
Soared to the steep of heaven, and veiled the shining sun.

CV.

Of helms, and clashing shields, and lances brast
In the first shock, loud rumour roars around;
Here rolls a steed, and there, his rider cast,
One gallops, maddening at the trumpet's sound.
Here lies a warrior lifeless on the ground;
And here another, compassed by his foes,
Groans in the anguish of his mortal wound;
Dire is the fight, and still, the more they close,
And mix, more bloody, sharp, and obstinate it grows.

CVI.

Light leaped Argantes in the midmost throng,
And from a soldier wrung his iron mace:
Bursting the dense crowd as he rode along,
He whirled it round, and soon made ample space:
Raymond alone he looks for; holds in chase;
With Raymond only struggles to engage;
Pressing against him with a giant's pace,
He like a wolf seemed burning to assuage
With his quaffed blood, the thirst and hunger of his rage.

CVII.

But many a harsh impediment he met;
Still fierce encounters his rash course controlled;
Him the two Gerards, with Ormane beset,
Guido, and Barneville, the brave and bold:
Yet not e'en these his progress can withhold;
Foaming he toils, he struggles to the last:
As caverned streams, or fires in prison rolled,
Wage fiercer war when loose outbursts the blast,
So raged his power opposed, so forth in splendour passed.

CVIII.

He slew Ormano, wounded Guido, felled
Barneville, stunned, and stretched amidst the slain;
But fast the gathering crowd against him swelled,
And circling locked him in a tenfold chain
Of men and arms that pinion and restrain
His giant powers;—whilst by his single hand
The scales of war an equal poise maintain,
To Baldwin Godfrey issues his command:
"Now to the conflict move thy gallant Frison band;

CIX.

"And on the left, where most the battle raves,
Charge them in flank!" he heard, and he obeyed:
Swift as the roll of ocean's mountain waves
Before the wind was the encounter made:
An energy so mountainous o'erweighed
The Asian troops, too languid to sustain
The Franks' fresh shock,—in ruin retrograde
They bend—their lines are broke—and on the plain
Roll horsemen, horses, flags, and pennons snapt in twain.

CX.

From the same charge the right wing turned and fled;
None, save Argantes, made defence or stay;
With gory rowels and loose reins they sped
In haste, urged headlong by supreme dismay;
Alone the bold Argantes stood at bay;
He faced the driven storm, the rushing bands;
Nor made less havoc on that signal day,
Than if Earth's Titan with his hundred hands,
Had brandished fifty shields, and fifty flashing brands.

CXI.

The thrust of swords, the shock of lances thrown,
The clang of maces and career of steeds
He braves, to all sufficient, though alone,
And dares on every side stupendous deeds.
His limbs all bruised, his marred arms cleft, he bleeds,
And sweat rolls down with blood, yet, fenced with phlegm,
He heeds it not; but crowd to crowd succeeds;
Pressed, overborne, he fails the tide to stem;
Onward abrupt they drive, and he perforce with them.

CXII.

To the wild fury of the tide he bends,
That like a cataract hurries him along;
Not like a man that flies, his heart commends
Fresh acts of slaughter to a hand still strong:
His eyes yet keep the terrors that belong
To their grim balls; he still in high disdain
Hurls forth defiance, and his flying throng,
Seeks by all modes in battle to retain,—
But no! his earnest toils their stupor renders vain.

CXIII.

His noble spirit neither can restrain
Nor regulate their flight; for hasty fear
Casts off all conduct, foams against the rein,
And like the adder closes its deaf ear
To prayers though mild, and threats howe'er severe;
But the wise Chief, to whose reflective eye
Fortune and beckoning Victory appear
To crown his hopes, sends forth fresh troops to ply
The glad pursuit, and cast the day's decisive die.

CXIV.

And, but the special day prefixed by God,
Was not yet given to run its golden round,
The Christians then in Salem's courts had trod,
And a blest period to their labours found:
But Hell's black Angels, from the Deep unbound,
Who saw how fast their tyranny declined
In the tremendous conflict, swarm around,
(Of heaven permitted) in an instant bind
The air in billowy clouds, and raise the' ungoverned wind.

CXV.

From mortal eyes dark vapours snatch the sun;
Fires flash; the kindred elements rebel;
All heaven burns black, and, smouldering, shows more dun
E'en than the horrible obscure of hell:
Mid showers of hail the long, loud thunders yell;
Fields float; the leas are drowned; not boughs alone
Crash in the rushing blast's sonorous swell,
But oaks, rocks, hills to their foundation-stone
Quake to the roaring storm, or in the whirlwind groan.

CXVI.

At once the hail, the lightning, and the wind
Full in the Christians' eyes with fury played;
Forced, they recede! blank sadness fills each mind,
And sudden terrors their stout hearts invade.
Few, few (as little through the hideous shade
Could be discerned) around their flags abide;
Which when Clorinda distantly surveyed,
She seized the sign, and with inspiring pride
Shaking aloft her sword, thus to her soldiers cried:

CXVII.

"Lo, friends, Heaven fights for us! the hours are numbered,
And Fate and Justice to our aid arise;
Our faces are untouched, our hands uncumbered,
The storm beats only in the Christians' eyes;
On them alone the irritated skies
Pour doubt and death, pour ruin and dismay;
And Heaven strikes down their lances, and denies
To their bewildered view the light of day;
On! where God's finger points, 'tis Victory leads the way!"

CXVIII.

Thus cheered the Amazon her drooping ranks,
And, bearing on her back the horrid rain
Of hell, in furious charge assailed the Franks,
And scorned the idle thrusts they gave again.
Then too Argantes turned his bridle-rein,
And dreadful slaughter of the victors made;
Who the fierce brunt ill able to sustain,
Yielded the point, and but their backs displayed
To bide the infuriate storm, and sharp vindictive blade.

CXIX.

The rage immortal and the mortal sword
Upon their shoulders smote them as they fled,
Whose blood, in union with the rain that poured,
Fell in fast showers, and dyed the' arena red.
Here midst the heaps of dying and of dead,
Pyrrhus and good Ridolpho slumbered calm;
Death on their eyes his purple finger laid;
This sighed out life beneath Argantes' arm,—
Of that, Clorinda boasts the' imperishable palm.

CXX.

Thus fled the Franks; nor meanwhile ceased all hell,
Nor ceased the Syrians still to give them chase;
Sole against arms, threats, hailstones, the dire swell
Of whirlwind, thunder, and the arrowy blaze
Of momentary lightnings, his bold face
Godfrey advanced; and with supreme disdain
Chiding his Barons for a flight so base,
Spurred forth, the Camp-Gate sternly to maintain,
And in the trenches saved his scared and scattered train.

CXXI.

And twice, despite the hurricane that roared,
Against Argantes furiously he flew;
Twice beat him back; as oft his naked sword
Pierced the thick phalanx, bathed in lightnings blue.
At last within the ramparts he withdrew
In the lorn rear of his disordered ranks,
And conquest yielded to the' infernal crew.
The foe returns, and the disheartened Franks
Rest, like a flood retired within its reed-crowned banks.

CXXII.

Nor can they wholly yet the furies shun
Of the black storm, which lightens, rains, and hails;
Quenched are their lights and torches one by one,
And the flood deepens, and the wind prevails;
Breaks the strong cordage; splits the beams and rails;
Plucks up whole tents, which far, far-off are whirled;
The rains beat time to the loud-roaring gales:
And in the tune from Heaven's dread organ hurled,
Hell's bellowing thunders join, and stun the' affrighted world.

CANTO VIII.

Stanza xxxii

ARGUMENT.

A KNIGHT to Godfrey sent, relates with tears
The valiant deeds and downfall of the Dane;
The' Italians, trusting to vague signs and fears
Of treachery, deem their loved Rinaldo slain;
Her torch Alecto whirls, and with disdain
And lust of vengeance sets their souls ablaze;
They menace Godfrey with their threats insane;
But he, unawed, to Heaven for succour prays,
And with his voice alone the' infuriate storm allays.

I.

THE roar of the loud tempest now was ceased;
Whist were the winds; the bellowing thunders mute;
And the calm morn, in the cerulean east,
With cheek of rose and golden-sandalled foot,
Left her divine pavilion to salute
With smiles the world: but they whose wrath awoke
The storm, yet ceased not their malign dispute
And damned charms; first Ashtaroth silence broke,
And to Alecto thus, her snaky sister, spoke:

II.

"Alecto! mark, where, posting o'er the sands
Fleet as an angry ghost, careers yon knight,
Who living has escaped the Soldan's hands,
Nor is it in our power to stay his flight!
Grave deeds he very soon will bring to light;
Deeds sore upon the Frank,—his comrades' fall,
Thousands left stark upon the field of fight
With their hot Chief,—from which I doubt not, all
The Christian host will urge Rinaldo's quick recal.

III.

"How fatal this were, judge; we must oppose
Our force and craft to the consulting Peers;
Arouse thee, then: descend amidst our foes,
And what this herald to insatiate ears
Tells with good purpose, turn to blood and tears:
Up! up! breathe fire, breathe poison in the veins
Of the mixt nations; stir up tumults fierce;
Move wrath, revenge; move discord and disdains;
Till through the total Camp unbounded uproar reigns!

IV.

"This work becomes thee and the noble vaunt
Made to our prince;"—the monster nought replied,—
It was enough—the words her soul enchant,
The project charms,—she spreads her hoarse wings wide,
And downward hurries with the morning tide.
The Knight, meanwhile, who thus their notice took,
The Camp approached, and to the warders cried,
With haste and deep emotion in his look,
"Warriors, I claim your grace; conduct me to your Duke!"

V.

Numbers were ready of the curious crowd,
Eager to hear the news he had to name,
To guide him to their Chief; he lowly bowed,
And kissed the honoured hand that made the frame
Of empires tremble: "Sire," he said, "whose fame
Is bounded only by the' Atlantic beach
And starry roof of heaven! would that I came
Knowledge of happier incidents to teach!"—
Awhile his face he veiled, then thus resumed his speech:

VI.

"Sweno, the Thane of Denmark's only son,
The stay and glory of his failing years,
Burned to be ranked with those thy gonfalon
Conducts, the valiant troop of chevaliers
Who wield the sword for Jesus: not the fears
Of toil and peril, not the hope to' acquire
Soon the void throne, not e'en the' appealing tears
Showered from the fond eyes of his aged sire,
Could in his generous heart control the high desire.

VII.

"He glowed to learn the military art—
Perils to dare and hardships to endure,
Of thee, their noble Chief; he felt, in part,
Shame and resentment for his name obscure,
Hearing on every hand what praise mature
In his green youth Rinaldo had acquired;
But that which most his spirit did allure,
Was less the wish of man to be admired,
Than zeal for God's renown, by lively faith inspired.

VIII.

"The shrewd delays his father's fears contrived,
He baffled, formed an army bold and brave,
And, marching straight for Thrace, at length arrived
Where throned Byzantium towers above the wave.
Here the Greek Cæsar in his palace gave
The prince warm welcome; here an envoy came
From thee, who, prompt the onward path to pave
Of our adventure, told at large the fame
Of Antioch won, and held to Persia's lasting shame;—

IX.

"Held in despite of Persia, who at once
Moved to invest it, with the boast rebuoyed
Of powers so vast, it seemed that all her sons
Swarmed to the war and left her kingdoms void;
First upon thee, on others next he joyed
To touch—on Raymond's prudence, Tancred's might;
Till to Rinaldo passing, he employed
A world of words to paint his first bold flight,
And each fair wreath which since his sword has reaped in fight.

X.

"He told, in fine, how that your hosts around
These towers already in strict siege were cast;
And wooed him, yet unlaurelled, to be found
In this proud field, the noblest and the last:
His words roused Sweno's spirit like a blast
Of trumpets, and in his young bosom bred
A wish so strong, that every hour he passed
Appeared an age, till he himself should tread
The hallowed soil, and turn his unfleshed falchion red.

XI.

"Your glory preyed on him; the world's applause
Seemed to upbraid his spiritless career;
Those who or begged or counselled him to pause,
Alike he heard not, or disdained to hear;
No fear of peril knew he but the fear
Lest he too late should be in thine to share,—
This only hazard seemed to him severe;
Those with which others peopled their despair,
He either not perceived, or stood resolved to dare.

XII.

"His own brave zeal precipitates his fate,
Fate—his wooed guide, and our enforced ally,
Since scarce for his departure would he wait
Till the first rays of morning streaked the sky:
Of various routes, he counted the most nigh
The best,—enough! it was our Chief that chose;
No pass so close, no mountain shows so high,
Too deep no forest waves, no torrent flows,
For us to scale or stem, though held by furious foes.

XIII.

"Now round our steps the armed barbarians press
Now spring from ambush: hunger, toil, and pain
In turn we bore; but over all distress
We triumphed,—scattered were our foes, or slain
Success assured us, victory made us vain,
And, day by day, more confident we grew;
Till one fair eve we camped upon the plain,
With Palestine's green hills almost in view,
Blind to the' events, alas, that did so soon ensue!

XIV.

"Sudden our scouts returned: they had beheld
The Turkish Crescent in our van appear,
Had caught the sullen clang of sword and shield,
And deemed, by various signals to the ear
And eye, some vast embattled army near:
On many a soldier's face these tidings spread
The pallid whiteness of despairing fear;
Sweno alone, of all the host he led,
Changed not in thought or look, in gesture, voice, or tread.

XV.

"'Brothers,' he cried, 'Oh now, how near we clasp
The victor's laurel, or the martyr's crown!
The first I hope, nor less desire to grasp
The greater merit with the like renown:
This very field, let Fate or smile or frown,
Shall Memory vest with an immortal bloom,
And as a hallowed spot deliver down
To future times, which, glorying in our doom,
Shall either point our spoils, or flower-entwine our tomb!'

XVI.

"This said,—our posts marked out, the watch disposed,
He bade us all upon our shields to rest;
Nor, whilst in needful slumber he reposed,
Would he of helm or mail himself divest.
'T was midnight: Sleep on every eye had pressed
The' oblivious sweetness of her tranquil spell,
And the tired soldier was in visions blest,
When instantaneously a barbarous yell
Rose to the silent stars, and shook the' abyss of hell.

XVII.

"'To arms!' we shout, 'to arms!' and, cased in arms,
See Sweno first before all else aspire;
Whilst, gathering grandeur from the loud alarms,
His eyes and cheeks are flushed with generous fire.
Lo, we are charged! a circle deep and dire
Fronts and assails us, wheresoe'er we move;
And thickening, deepening, drawing nigh and nigher,
Round us of swords and spears a twilight grove
Frowns, and an arrowy cloud falls hissing from above.

XVIII.

"Uneven the fight! against a single Dane
Full twenty Arabs laid their weapons bare;
Many of these were wounded, many slain
By darts tossed blindly through the gloom of air;
But of the numbers struck or slaughtered there,
And by what hands, the dusky shades amid,
No mortal eye could mark, nor tongue declare;
The Night our loss beneath her mantle hid,
And, with the loss we bore, the valiant deeds we did.

XIX.

"But through the thick press of the fighting crowd,
And through the dark concealment of the hour,
Prince Sweno shone; his valour was avowed
By a sublime ubiquity of power,
Surpassing all belief; of blood a shower,
And heaps of slaughtered formed around the slayer
A crimson moat—a rampart and a tower;
And, wheresoe'er he rushed, he seemed to bear
Death in his red right hand, and in his eyes despair.

XX.

"Thus fought we, till the Virgin of the Morn
Arising touched the heavens with rosy red;
But when the night's dusk horrors were withdrawn
That hid from view the horror of the dead,
The so long-wished-for light before us spread
A scene, O God! the stoutest to appal,
Of grief, of pity, agony, and dread:
The Camp was piled with corpses, as though all
Were of our army swathed in Death's purpureal pall.

XXI.

"Of full two thousand, ninety scarce remain;
When Sweno saw the multitudes that slept
Pale in their gore, if aught of grief or pain,
If aught of sadness o'er his brave heart crept,
He showed it not,—his eye its lustre kept,
His voice its tone: 'Come, follow,' was his cry,
'These brave companions who have far o'erstept
The streams of Tartarus, and with footsteps high
Printed in glorious blood our pathway to the sky!'

XXII.

"He said: and glad, I think, of hasting fate
No less in spirit than in aspect, bore
With breast intrepid and with brow elate
Against the ruinous assault and roar
Of the barbarians; not the plate they wore,
Although 't were thrice refined, nor cap of steel,
Though into diamond charmed by wizard lore,
Might stand the strokes his fire and fury deal,
Into one total wound till gashed from head to heel.

XXIII.

"It was not life, but valour's subtile fire
Sustained the living corse no strength could tame;
Struck, he re-strikes, nor yet his members tire,
The more they maim him, more he them doth maim:
When lo! loose-raging from the bloody game,
A Turk arrived, who all the rest surpassed
In savage aspect and gigantic frame;—
Long time they obstinately fought; at last,
By numbers pressed, to ground the dauntless youth was cast.

XXIV.

"He fell—ah, bitter fate!—nor left behind
One that could yield revenge: oh, blood well-poured;
Oh bones, abandoned to the bleaching wind,
Poor mangled relics of my Prince adored!
I summon you; speak! if I sought to hoard
My hated life, if then I did deny
My breast to spear, mace, sabre, shaft, or sword!
No! had it pleased our Arbiter on high,
Death had I dared enough, to be allowed to die.

XXV.

"Senseless amid my slaughtered friends I fell,
And there was left for dead; nor what our foes
Since or sustained, or acted can I tell,—
An icy torpor all my senses froze;
But when at length my faint eyes did unclose
From blank unconsciousness, the wings of Night
Seemed o'er the shadowy landscape to repose;
Feebly I oped them, and a glimmering light
Far-off, appeared by fits to swim before my sight.

XXVI.

"Albeit, no strength had I to recognise
E'en nearest objects through the void opaque,
But saw as one whose overwearied eyes,
Nor all asleep, nor openly awake,
Close and unclose without the power to take
Regard or cognizance of things most nigh;
And now my cruel wounds began to ache,
Bit by the keen night air, doomed thus to lie,
Faint, on the naked earth, beneath a freezing sky.

XXVII.

"Meanwhile the light drew momently more near,
Till it arrived and rested at my side;
Then gentle whisperings murmured in my ear,—
I raised with pain my eyelids, and descried
Two tall commanding figures near me glide,
Clothed in long robes, and shaking in the air
Two torches: 'Son,' I heard them say, 'confide
In Him who oft consents the good to spare,
And with his grace forestals the sacrifice of prayer!'

XXVIII.

"And speaking thus, the awful two their palms
O'er me in holy benediction spread,
And in low accents murmuring mystic psalms,
Then little heard and less conceived, they said:
'Arise!' all lightly from my grass-green bed
I rose; new light flowed to my eye-balls dim;
My wounds were healed, my thrilling pains were fled;
O marvellous grace! I seemed in bliss to swim,
And felt new life and strength uplifting every limb.

XXIX.

"Awe-struck I viewed them, and could scarce believe
The truths that struck my dazzled sprite, till one
Of the cowled sages said: 'What doubts affright?
On what illusions do thy fancies run,
O thou of little faith? in us, my son,
Men of like flesh and blood thy wonder meets;
Servants of Jesu, we have wished to shun
The flattering world, its fables and false sweets,
And here as hermits live in rocks and lone retreats.

XXX.

"'Me to this service did that God ordain,
Whose throne is builded in ubiquity;
Who by ignoblest means does not disdain
To work his will, the wonderful and high:
He would not that the form, which to his eye
Enclosed of late so beautiful a sprite,
Should on these lonely wilds neglected lie,—
The which, when made immortal, robed in light,
Yet with its radiant twin shall one day reunite;—

XXXI.

"'No! Sweno's sanctified remains must have
A tomb befitting valour so sublime,
To which alike the beautiful and brave,
Virgins and chevaliers from every clime,
Shall point the finger through all future time;
But lift thine eyes now to the stars, and mark
The one that to the crown of heaven doth climb
As on its golden car! that sunlike spark
Shall to his noble corse direct us through the dark.'

XXXII.

"I looked; and as the brilliant meteor rolled,
(Or rather midnight sun) a ray descended,
Which, like a glorious line of liquid gold
Ruled by some pencil, to the earth extended;
And o'er the body, when its flight was ended,
Shook from its skirts so beautiful a flood
Of coloured light, that all its wounds shone splendid,
Each like a ruby ring or golden stud,
And straight the face I knew, in its grim mask of blood.

XXXIII.

"He lay not prone, but as his high desire
Was ever turned toward the stars, his face,
E'en as the martyr's from his couch of fire,
Looked upward still to heaven's blue fields of space;
Closed was his red right hand in strict embrace
Grasping that sword, in act to strike, whose blade
Such ravage wrought; his left, with careless grace,
In meek devotion on his breast was laid,
As though for peace to God the parting spirit prayed.

XXXIV.

"Whilst I his wounds bedewed with tears, that eased
None of my anguish for his fall deplored,
The ancient sage drew forward, and released
From his reluctant hand the' inviolate sword;
And said to me: 'This crimson glaive which poured
Such streams of blood from bosoms of the foe,
Observe! perhaps the world cannot afford—
(Its strength none better than thyself can know)
One or of finer mould, or more superb in show.

XXXV.

"'Hence, Heaven wills not, although a timeless doom
Has from its lord divorced the glorious brand,
That here with sordid rust it should consume,
But pass admired from martial hand to hand;—
To one who, with a spirit no less grand,
Shall with like force and skill its lightnings sway
For longer time, a happier fate command,
And with it wreak—his ghost awaits the day—
Full vengeance wreak on him, who did Lord Sweno slay.

XXXVI.

"'T was Solyman slew Sweno; Solyman
Must therefore by the sword of Sweno fall!
Take it, and bear it then where breezes fan
The Christian banners round high Salem wall;
Nor let a single fear thy mind appal,
That in these regions, or by night or day,
Fresh obstacles shall rise, or ills befal;
For He who sends thee forth, shall, when astray,
Guide thee, and smooth with flowers the roughness of thy way.

XXXVII.

"'There 't is his will that thou declare at length,
For to this end art thou to health restored,
The zeal, the piety, and valiant strength
Which thou hast witnessed in thy darling lord;
That others on their mantles bright and broad
May stamp the purple Cross, with holy aim
Caught from this tale,—a tale for Time to laud
Through long futurity, the whilst his name
In like illustrious minds lights up young Glory's flame.

XXXVIII.

" 'What Christian hero may deserve the meed
Of this bequest, remains to be made known;
It is Rinaldo, to whom all concede
The palm of prowess, yet, a branch scarce blown.
Bear it to him, and say, to him alone
The eyes alike of men and angels look
To' avenge his death, and for his loss atone:'
Whilst on his lips I hang, in wonder's book
A new portentous page my charmed attention took.

XXXIX.

" For sudden, where the warrior's corse reposed,
A rich sarcophagus was seen to rise,
Which in its heart his relics had enclosed,
I know not how, nor by what rare device;
And, briefly blazoned with heraldic dyes,
Shone forth the name and virtues of the dead.
From the strange sight my fascinated eyes
I could not lift; each glance fresh marvel bred;
Now I the porphyry scanned, and now the' inscription read.

XL.

" 'Here,' said the ancient, 'near his friends shall lie
Thy prince's corse, safe shrined from vulgar sight,
Whilst their pure spirits, passed into the sky,
From the full fountain of divine delight
Quaff endless joy; but thou the last sad rite
Of tears—the all that piety can pay,
Hast paid, and nature claims repose; this night
I claim thee for my guest, until the ray
Of the new morning rise, to light thee on thy way.'

XLI.

" O'er hill and dale we walked, a devious track;
Scarce could my weary steps with theirs keep pace;
Till high, midst toppling crags and cedars black,
A hollow cave received us, round whose face
Green ivies clustered,—his lone dwelling place
Romantic; here amongst the wolves and bears,
With his disciple, safe he spends his days;
Clear Innocence his shield, his breastplate prayers,
Armour of trustier proof than aught the warrior wears!

XLII.

"My food was roots,—moss, leaves, and dulcet thyme,
The couch whereon I slept fatigue away;
But soon as zephyr rang his earliest chime
Among the pines, and morn's arising ray
Tinted the eastern cliffs with gold and grey,
The watchful Hermits rose to matin prayer,
And I with them; I next inquired my way
Through the strange region; of the holy pair
Grateful my farewell took; and here my tale declare."

XLIII.

He ceased, and Godfrey answered: "Tears, Sir Knight,
Tears for thy tale, 't is all we can, receive;
Things strange and doleful hast thou brought to light,
Whence we with reason veil our face, and grieve;
Alas the' injustice of that cruel eve!
That friends so full of zeal, so brave in fight,
Fate should from pleasant life so soon bereave!
Thy valiant Lord was, like a flash of light,
One glittering instant shown, then sudden snatched from sight.

XLIV.

"But wherefore grieve? The prize of realms and gold
Shows mean, compared with this their blissful doom;
Never were bays so glorious, e'en of old,
Given in the car-climbed Capitol of Rome!
Throned in Heaven's star-lit temple, they assume
Sceptres of palm, and crowns of flowers that grow
In Eden, odorous with immortal bloom:
There, to the radiant wounds received below,
Each joyous martyr points, and glories in the show

XLV.

"But thou, who for fresh toils and dangers new
With the church militant art left behind,
Shouldst in their blissful triumphs triumph too,
And, to the wise decrees of Heaven resigned,
Give now to joy thy melancholy mind;
And, for Bertoldo's son,—know, that he strays
Far from the camp,—the wanderer who may find?
But tempt not thou the desert's doubtful ways
In search, till certain news instruct us where he strays.

XLVI.

This their discourse in others' breasts renewed
Their latent love for fair Sophia's son;
And some exclaimed, "Through what wild desert rude
Does not the youth now rove? what risks not run
From the marauding hordes?" Nor was there one
That had not some brave story in his praise
To tell the Dane, of laurels nobly won;
The long bright tissue of his deeds they blaze;
Which he with transport hears, and undisguised amaze.

XLVII.

When now remembrance of the absent youth
Had touched all hearts, and melted many an ey
To tears of tenderness and anxious ruth,
Behold, the troops, commissioned to supply
The camp, from nightly forage far and nigh
Return! vast flocks and herds with them they lead,
That fill the region with their welcome cry;
Corn, though not much, and fragrant hay to feed,
With the fat beeves they bring, each knight his hungry steed.

XLVIII.

And last, not least, a too decisive sign
Of tragic chance, severely to be rued,—
The good Rinaldo's vests and armours fine,
Those rent and bloody, these all hacked and hewed!
Quick through the host, in sad incertitude
And keen alarm, the sudden rumour flew;
For who such things could hide? the multitude,
Sore grieving at the tidings, thronged to view
The brave young hero's arms,—they saw them, and they knew.

XLIX.

Too well they knew his hauberk's ponderous plates
And moony shield, far-flashing, on whose face
Is seen emblazed the bird which educates
Her unquilled infants on the sun to gaze
With eyes undazzled by its ardent rays;
Or first, or all alone, it used to strain
Its proud wings fearless, giving glory chase;
Now, not without deep pity, wrath, and pain,
They see it cleft, and streaked with many a sanguine stain.

L.

Whilst the crowd whisper, and the dark event
In various wise account for each to each,
The virtuous Duke for Aliprando sent,
Chief of the troop, a man sincere of speech,
And whose ingenuous words might none impeach,
Stamped as they were with truth's inviolate seal;
Then thus: "The meaning of this mystery teach;
Both how and whence these arms were had, reveal,
Nor, whether good or bad, the slightest fact conceal."

LI.

"Far as an active traveller may attain
In two days' journey hence," the knight replied,
"In hollow of high hills, a little plain
Lies from the road to Gaza somewhat wide;
To which a brook's slow waters gurgling glide
'Twixt brier and bough, from tangled steep to steep;
Low down, o'erarching oaks on every side
Fling their brown shadows o'er a dingle deep;
Fit screen for ambushed men their watch unseen to keep.

LII.

"And as we sought, in this sequestered nook,
For herds or flocks that to its grass-green bed
Might come to graze, we saw beside the brook,
Stretched on the purpled herbs, a knight lie dead;
Crimson his vests, his arms were dropt with red;
Through every heart instinctive horror shot,
For well we knew them, though with blood o'erspread:
To view his face, I, hastening to the spot,
Found but a headless trunk—the severed head was not!

LIII.

"The right hand too was gone, and many a wound
His noble body bore, from back to breast;
Hard by, the argent Eagle on the ground
Lay with his vacant helm and battered crest.
Whilst round the greenwood shade we gazed, in quest
Of some one to explain so strange a case,
A peasant passed, who spying us, repressed
His steps, and from the solitary place,
In instant act to fly, turned back his frighted face.

LIV.

"But, chased and taken, to our stern demand
And inquisition, he at length replied,
That he, the day before, had seen a band
Of armed soldiers from the forest ride;
One bore a head fresh severed at his side,
Grasped by its golden gory locks; his scan
Was keen—the visage clearly he descried,
And to his judgment (so his story ran)
'Twas of a beardless youth maturing into man.

LV.

"In shawl of satin soon the murderer slung,
And bore it pendant at his saddle-bow;
He knew them Christians by their foreign tongue
And red-cross habits, or he judged them so:
Weeping I stripped the body, nor was slow
To speak my apprehensions; paid the brave
The last sad rites, the best I could bestow;—
His dirge was chanted by the whispering wave,
And the grey rustling woods sang requiem o'er his grave:—

LVI.

"But if the corse be his whom I bewail,
A nobler tomb his relics should receive:"
Nought left untold of his mysterious tale,
Good Aliprando took his mournful leave.
Godfrey stood pensive, and the livelong eve
Sighed as the subject inly he discussed;
No clear assurance could his doubts relieve;
And much he wished, by signs of surer trust,
To known the mangled trunk and homicide unjust.

LVII.

The night has risen, and silently unfurled
O'er heaven's blue infinite her brooding wings;
And sorceress Slumber, walking through the world,
On every eye her dulcet syrop flings;
Thou, Argillan, alone, by grief's sharp stings
Pierced to the quick, her blandishments dost slight,
Busying thy brain on mighty thoughts and things;
Nor giv'st to thy wild eyes and troubled sprite,
Mute quiet's peaceful calm, or slumber's soothing rite.

LVIII.

He, of a fervid and impetuous mood,
Active of hand, and turbulent of tongue,
Was on the Tronto born; in civil feud
Nursed by fixt hatred, and exiled whilst young;
Thus, by strong passions to resentment stung,
In woods and wilds a robber he became,
And stained with blood the rocks from which he sprung;
Till, into Asia summoned, he his fame
Bravely redeemed in war, and gained a nobler name.

LIX.

At length, toward morn he closed his eyes and slept,—
No calm, sweet sleep, but the dull synonym
Of death;—through his thick blood deep stupor crept,
Possessed each sense, and locked up every limb
In dreadful nightmare; then, delusions dim
Swarmed to his brain, by curst Alecto sent;
He slept, not rested; for the Fury grim,
In strangling dreams of terrible portent,
Her own alarming shape did darkly represent.

LX.

A headless trunk of monstrous size she feigned,
Shorn of its better arm; the left, the head
Fast by its horrent hair aloft sustained,
Disguised 'twixt livid pale and sanguine red.
The lips still breathed, and breathing spoke though dead;
Dripped the dark blood; and many a doleful sigh
Shrilled from the skull, as hollowly it said,
"Lo, Argillan! 't is daylight in the sky!
Fly, fly these dreadful tents! their impious Chieftain fly!

LXI.

"From his curst frauds which killed me but of late,
Who, comrades dear, shall keep you or defend?
The' insidious Traitor in his rancorous hate,
Thinks to slay you, as late he slew your friend;
But if that hand so eager to transcend
The' undying fame which Brutus dared to seize,
Can on its own audacity depend,—
Fly not; but let the tyrant's blood appease
My angry ghost, and give the' unquiet spirit ease.

LXII.

"I will be with thee, a pale shade, and yield
Arms to thy hand, and anger to thy breast!"
She said; and breathing, all his spirit filled
With a new fury not to be repressed:
He broke from sleep: and trembling rolled distrest,
While madness sparkled in each straining ball,
His poisonous eyes, of all the Fiend possessed:
Armed as he was, he flew to summon all
Italia's fiery sons, obsequious to the call.

LXIII.

He led them where Rinaldo's arms were hung
In funeral pomp around his vacant tent;
And thus, with pride and indignation stung,
His grief divulged, and gave his passion vent:
"Shall then a vile tyrannic race, whose bent
No faith can bind, no reason can restrain,—
Kites, never gorged, though ever on the scent
For blood and gold, shall they with iron rein
Curb our proud necks, and tame our spirits to the chain?

LXIV.

"What we have borne in sufferings, shame, and tears,
Six summers now, beneath their fatal spell,
Is such that Rome will, for a thousand years,
With anger burn, and with disdain rebel;
I will not, no, brave souls! I will not tell
How genius, prowess, arms were rendered void,
When Tancred triumphed and Cilicia fell;
What wonted arts the traitor Frank employed,
When that which Valour won, usurping Guile enjoyed!

LXV.

"I will not tell, when need and time require
Firm thought, bold heart, and executing hand,
How through a thousand deaths we all aspire
With axe, mace, dagger, truncheon, blade, or brand;
First where the prize is fixed, the peril planned,—
But when the palms, but when the prey they share,
The pride, the praise, the glory, gold or land,
These are not ours—'t is but for us to stare,
As they the trophies claim, the plunder homeward bear!

LXVI.

"Peace to the thought! there was perhaps a time
When serious and severe such wrongs would show;
Now let them pass—this last tremendous crime
Has made their seeming scarlet white as snow;
Rinaldo have they slain, insulting so
All laws divine and human; in his bloom
Cut off, the beautiful, the brave; and lo!
Flash not the skies? cleaves not, O earth, thy womb,
In its perpetual night the monsters to entomb?

LXVII.

"They've slain Rinaldo, of our faith the shield
And sword! and lies he unrevenged?—he lies
Yet unrevenged; and on the naked field,
Unhymned, untombed, beneath the freezing skies,
Laced o'er with wounds in terrible disguise:
Ask you what barbarous ruffian smote him down?
Of him who can be ignorant? you have eyes!
Who marks not, jealous of our high renown,
Both Godfrey's damning praise, and Baldwin's envious frown?

LXVIII.

"But why debate! I swear by Heaven, that Heaven
Which not unpunished lets the perjured pass,
'Twixt light and dark, before my sight was driven
His wandering ghost, a pale and mangled mass;
A sight how wildly horrible! alas,
What frauds from Godfrey did it not divine!
It was no dream; my brain is as a glass,—
I see it yet; where'er my eyes incline,
There the red figure stalks, the eyeballs dimly shine.

LXIX.

"What shall we do? to that imperious hand
Which so unjust a death yet foully stains,
Submit for aye? or seek the far-off land,
Where rich Euphrates laves the' Assyrian plains,
And many a city, many a town sustains,
Held by a feeble and unwarlike race,
Soon to be tamed, I ween! with little pains
This may we win; no Frank shall there find place,
To share our hard-earned spoils, or brand us with disgrace.

LXX.

"Yes, go, and let the guiltless hero lie
All unrevenged, if so it seemeth good;
Though, if your chill and stagnant blood boiled high,
Oh, boiled it high and ardent as it should!
This poisonous snake that has devoured for food
The flower and pride of our Italian clime,
Should to the rest of his accursed brood,
By his own pangs and death, of punished crime
A noted warning give, through long succeeding time.

LXXI.

"I, I, if courage serves your wish to dare
All that it should, will first assail his crest!
This very hour my dagger will I bare,
To probe his heart, malignant treason's nest!"
He said; and on the spirits of the rest,
His wrathful genius and electric eye
Their own tumultuous energy impressed;
And, "Arm, oh arm you!" was the madman's cry:
"Arm! arm!" the' indignant youth in unison reply.

LXXII.

Midst them Alecto whirled her torch, and fire
Commixt with poison in their bosoms blew;
The' infernal thirst for blood, the frenzied ire,
Each dreadful instant more controlless grew:
Forward the snaky witch dilating flew,
And to the Swiss from the Italians passed,
Storms in their fiery hearts alike to brew;
Thence mid the British troops her plagues she cast;
All lend a gaping mouth, and take the' infection fast.

LXXIII.

Nor did the public loss and grief alone
Rouse in these foreign bands disdain so deep;
They had old piques and grudges of their own;
Whence this new wrong but added to the heap
Fresh nutriment; each scorn, long lulled asleep,
Revived,—the Franks as tyrants were accursed;
Their wrath and hate all limits overleap;
Swell in proud threats, and fixt to dare the worst,
Loud as a roaring stream, restraint's strong floodgates burst.

LXXIV.

So water, boiling in a brazen vase
With fire too fervent, gurgles, fumes, and glows:
Till, hot at heart, it lifts its raging face
Above the brim, frets, froths, and overflows.
No remedy remains; too few were those
Whose truth-illumined minds went not astray,
The headstrong crowd's distraction to compose;
Tancred, Camillo, William, were away,
And all whose sovereign power their heat might else allay.

LXXV.

'T is uproar all; like tipsy bacchanals
The crowd to arms precipitately spring;
And now are heard fierce cries, seditious calls,
Shields clash, hoarse trumpets stern defiance fling,
And beardless boys heroic ditties sing:
Meanwhile swift messengers, on every hand,
To Godfrey warning of rebellion bring;
And armed Baldwin with his unsheathed brand
Fast by his brother's side in silence takes his stand.

LXXVI.

Hearing the charge, his eyes to heaven he turns,
And to his God for wonted succour flees:
"Lord! thou who see'st how much my spirit spurns
The' imputed crime—thy sight all spirits sees,—
Rend the dark mantle of the mind from these;
Their hearts illumine with thy light divine;
Rebuke the furies of the crowd to peace,
And give mine unstained innocence to shine,
Pure in the world's dim sight, as pure it beams in thine!"

LXXVII.

He ceased; and felt new life and vigour dart
Warm thro' his veins, from heaven inbreathed, which shed
Light o'er his face, and fortified his heart
With faith; surrounded by his friends, he sped
'Gainst those who thought to' avenge the' ideal dead:
Though bristling arms illumined all the place;
Though hate and rage in every glance he read;
Though there were some reproached him to his face,
Stately he still held on, with firm, unfaltering pace.

LXXVIII.

He had his hauberk on,—a vest of white,
Richly embroidered, from his shoulders flowed;
Bare were his hands and head; and, to the height
Of dignity sublimed, his features glowed,
Bright as an Angel's from his blest abode
Sent sceptred forth: such was his port; he trod,
As on the winds; no arms at need he showed,
Dared them without,—but shook his golden rod;
And when he spoke, all seemed to hear the voice of God.

LXXIX.

"What senseless threats are these that brave the skies?
What idle clang of arms is this I hear?
Who stirred these tumults? is it in this wise
That your so-long-proved ruler ye revere?
Godfrey of guile what whisperer in the ear
Arraigns? who brings the accusation? who
Abets the charge? stand forth! let him appear!
Ye look perchance that I with prayers should sue,
Number my proofs in plea, and mercy crave from you:

LXXX.

"No! never shall the world that with my name
Resounds, to such debasement see me bend!
Me Truth, the memory of my deeds, my fame,
And this starred sceptre only shall defend:
Justice for once to grace shall condescend;
For once remit the dues she should receive,
Nor o'er the guilty her just scales suspend;
For former worth this error I forgive;
Live, to regret your fault, for young Rinaldo live!

LXXXI.

"The' Arch-culprit only with his blood must wash
Away the treason—Argillan shall die;
Who, moved by mere suspicion, base as rash,
Led the revolt, and bribed you with a lie!"
Whilst thus he spake, his more than kinglike eye
In pomp of horror on the ruffian shook
Lightnings and frowns, as from a living sky;
That Argillan, amazed, of force forsook,
Turned (who would think it?) pale, o'ermastered by a look.

LXXXII.

The crowd too, late so insolent, that roared
Such bold defiance forth of spite and pride,
Whose hands had been so swift to seize on sword,
Axe, torch, or javelin, as the fiend supplied,
(Hushed at his golden words,) could not abide
His glance; but cast their guilty eyes to ground,
While shame their cheeks to deepest crimson dyed;
And suffered Argillan, though bristled round
With all their ported spears, in fetters to be bound.

LXXXIII.

So when a lion, roaring in his rage,
Shakes high against the sun his frightful mane,
If he who tamed his wildness to the cage,
But knits his brows in visible disdain,—
His harsh rule fearing, fearing to sustain
His threats, he pays obedience to the spell,
Foregoes his fire and crouches to the chain;
Nor can his teeth, armed paws, or malice fell,
Spirit him up with pride, or tempt him to rebel.

LXXXIV.

'T is famed that there was seen, of cruel look
And threatening gesture, but celestial mould,
A winged warrior, who with one arm shook
Before the pious prince a targe of gold;
And with his right hand, dreadful to behold,
Brandished the lightnings of a naked sword,
From which some recent drops of crimson rolled;
The blood perhaps of realms on which were poured,
In his long-slumbering wrath, the vials of the Lord.

LXXXV.

The tumult thus composed, they cast aside
Their arms and evil wills with one consent;
And Godfrey, slowly, and in decent pride
Returned, admired, to his imperial tent:
On various cares and new engagements bent,
He now determines to attack the town,
Ere or the second or third day be spent;
And oft surveys the timbers late cut down,
That now in huge machines tremendous battle frown.

CANTO IX.

Stanza lxiii.

ARGUMENT.

THE Fury spurs on Solyman to make
A sharp assault upon the Franks by night;
God, who beholds the' infernal spirits take
Part in the charge, to countervail their spite,
Sends Michael down to earth, who puts to flight
Their evil host; when freed from their array,
The troop enthralled by fair Armida's sleight,
Returning, aid the Franks; at dawning day
His loss the Soldan sees, and murmuring flees away.

I.

BUT Hell's great Plague, who saw her rule dissolved,
The heats allayed, the passions lulled to peace,
Immutable of mood, and still resolved
To war on fate and the divine decrees,
Departs,—and where she passes, the green trees
Fade, the sick sun turns pale, the living springs
Stagnate, and cankers blight the flowery leas;
Charged with fresh furies, pondering fiercer things,
Headlong she shoots abroad, and claps her sounding wings.

II.

She, knowing well how by the busy arts
Of her foul consorts, to the Camp were lost
Rinaldo, Tancred, and the rest whose parts
In war were feared and celebrated most,
Exclaimed, "What wait we for, since clear the coast!
Now let our Solyman, when midnight lowers,
Unlooked-for come, and slay the sleeping host;
From a discordant camp, exhausted powers,
Surely (or much I hope) the victory will be ours!"

III.

This said, to the Arabian bands she flew,
Where, made their captain, Solyman remained;
Than whom no fiercer man the sabre drew
In Christ's defiance, or his laws disdained;
Not if the Titans were from hell unchained,—
Not if the earth were now to renovate
Her big-boned Giants: o'er the Turks he reigned,
And held his court in princely Nice of late,
In all the pomp and pride of oriental state.

IV.

He ruled the lands from Sangar's silver springs
To crook'd Meander and the Grecian shore,
Where the famed Phrygian and Bithynian kings,
The Mysians and the Lydians lived of yore,
With all who hear the stormy Euxine roar:
But when against the Turks, in Asian sky,
The pilgrim armies first their ensigns bore,
Conquered his realms, his Paynim chivalry,
Twice fought in tented field, were twice compelled to fly.

V.

When fortune oft he had in vain essayed,
Forced to abandon the loved kingdoms lost,
He to the Court of Egypt passed, in aid
Of its brave King, who proved a noble host;
Glad that a warrior so renowned, the boast
Of Asiatic story, should combine
With him in plans which all his soul engrossed,—
To drive the Christian powers from Palestine,
And to their pilgrims still deny the sacred shrine.

VI.

But, ere he openly denounced on them
Decided war, to make success more sure,
He would that Solyman, with gold and gem
Given for that use, the Arabs should secure;
Whilst he the Asian and barbaric Moor
Bribed to his ported flag; at his desire
The Soldan went; and quickly to his lure
Attached the greedy Arabs' souls of fire,
Robbers in every age, and myrmidons of hire.

VII.

Thus made their Chief, he now with blade and bow
O'erran Judea, gathering ample prey;
So that he barred all acess to and fro
Betwixt the tented camp and navied bay:
And brooding deep, from bitter day to day,
Over his ancient power, his present lot—
A ruined name, an empire passed away,—
Some greater deed his wrath resolved to plot,
Though yet he had not judged, or well determined what.

VIII.

To him Alecto hurried, in the guise
Of a grave man right venerably old,
With bearded lip, smooth chin, and piercing eyes,
And wrinkled aspect, bloodless to behold:
Her head a Turkish shawl in many a fold
Wreathed round; the vest across her shoulders flung,
Flowed to her heel; a scimetar in gold
Shone at her side; aback a quiver hung;
And in her martial hand she bore a bow unstrung.

IX.

"Whilst we," she said, "but traverse empty plains,
A howling wilderness of sands forlorn,
Where now no rapine to be reaped remains,
Nor conquest gained but such as we should scorn,
Godfrey to very heaven exalts his horn,
Smiting the City with his mustered powers;
And now his engines to the walls are drawn;
And we must see, if unimproved the hours,
Fire ride the flaring wind, and scale her topless towers.

X.

"Shall plundered herds, raped flocks, and hamlets burned
Be the sole spoils of Solyman? what then,
Are thus thy realms retrieved, thy wrongs returned,
Rule reacquired, or grandeur thine again?
Rouse thee, arouse! lead forth thine armed men;
Let Dedanim awake! let Kedar rise,
And storm the Dragon in his midnight den!
Trust to thine own Araspes, whose advice
Has, both in good and ill, approved itself of price.

XI.

"He looks not for us, dreads us not, disdains
The naked Arab as a timorous slave;
Nor dreams that tribes whom custom only trains
To spoils and flight, would dare a deed so grave.
But thy brave worth shall make the rovers brave
Against an armed camp, which slumbers bind
Apt for the sword!" Her counsel thus she gave;
And breathing all her furies in his mind,
Mounted the passing cloud, and mingled with the wind.

XII.

He, lifting up his arm toward the skies,
Shouts to her—"Thou, who fir'st my spirit so!
No man art thou, though under man's disguise;
I know thee—follow thee, behold! I go:
Where plains extended, mountains now shall grow,
Mountains of lifeless people gashed and stark;
Where burned the desert, streams of blood shall flow;
Be now my Genius; lead me to the mark;
And rule my lifted lance to conquer through the dark!"

XIII.

No dallying; no delay! he sounds his swarms,
Collects, harangues them, wins them to combine
And with his own electric ardour warms
The Camp to second his matured design:
All stand prepared; Alecto gave the sign;—
With her own lips the sounding brass she blew,
And loosed the banner on its breezy pine;
Swift march the hosts, but still as falling dew,—
So still, so swift, they e'en the course of fame outflew.

XIV.

Alecto led, then left them; she assumed
A courier's likeness and succinct array,
And at the time when chequering twilight gloomed,
And earth, 'twixt serious night and cheerful day,
Seemed pondering which dominion to obey,
Entering the City, to the king's divan
Through the mixt multitudes she made her way;
And to his ear disclosed what Solyman
Purposed by night—the hour, the signal, and the plan.

XV.

But now black shadows, flushed with vapours red,
Curtained the moon; the weeping stars withdrew;
And the chill skies, in lieu of hoar-frost, shed
On earth the semblance of a bloody dew:
Pale meteors fell, malignant goblins flew
Through heaven; and groans that froze the soul with fright
Were heard, whilst from his grots of brimstone blue,
The King of Ghosts let loose each damned sprite,
And from the void abyss spumed forth his densest night.

XVI.

Through these drear glooms the fiery Solyman
Sought the devoted tents; but when Night's wain
Had measured half its journey, and began
Sheer down heaven's western steep to drive amain,
Within a mile of the pavilioned plain,
Where the lulled Christian in his martial cloke
Slept unsuspecting, he his barbarous train
With food refreshed; then, farther to provoke
Their souls to deeds of blood, thus eloquently spoke:

XVII.

"Look on yon Camp, with thousand thefts and spoils
Dressed out, more widely famed than strongly manned,
That, like a sea, into its greedy coils
Has gathered all the wealth of Asian land?
This now boon Fortune offers to your hand,
The amplest booty with the slightest cost,
And the least peril; all is at command,—
Steeds clothed in scarlet, arms with gold embossed,
Woo you, not profit them; all, all shall be engrossed!

XVIII.

"This is no more the host whose arms subdued
Imperial Nice, and clove the Persian's crest;
For in a war so long as hath ensued,
The greater part, of life lie dispossessed:
Yet, grant it were entire,—in deepest rest
Is it not drowned! the sabre in the sheath?
Unlaced the hauberk? he is soon oppressed
Who sleeps,—his life hangs by a slender breath;
Warriors! the cell of sleep is but the porch to death.

XIX.

"On then, come on! I first will cleave a path
Through the grim guards within the entered wall:
Let all swords strike like mine! pattern your wrath
By mine; by mine your cruelty and gall!
Now let the Galilean's empire fall;
Now write you glorious in immortal gore;
And free your Asia from the tyrant's thrall!"
Thus inflamed he their spirits to the core;
Then to the deed of death moved stilly as before.

XX.

Lo, through the gloom the sentinels he spies,
By the faint twinkling of a casual lamp!
Nor can he longer hope in full surprise
To take the cautious Duke and slumbering Camp.
The sentries soon behold his lion-ramp,
And, their alarum sounding loud, bear back,
Warned of his numbers by their sullen tramp;
So that the foremost guards were roused, nor slack
To seize their ready arms, and face the near attack.

XXI.

Sure of discovery now, the Arabs wound
Their barbarous horns, and raised their yelling cry,
"Lillah il Allah!" to the well-known sound
Neighed all their steeds—earth rang as they rushed by
Bellowed the mountains, roared the rifted sky,
Roared the deep vales: the' abysses caught the tone,
And answered in drear thunder, whilst on high,
Alecto the blue torch of Phlegethon
Shook toward Zion hill, and signed her legions on.

XXII.

First rushed the Soldan on the guard, e'en then
In lax confusion, unarranged; less swift
Leaps the grim lion from his bosky den,
Shoots the fierce eagle from her mountain clift:
Floods, that pluck up and in their rapid drift
Roll down huts, rocks, and trees; lightnings, that blast
Strong towers with bolts that leave a burning rift;
Earthquakes, whose motions turn the world aghast,
Are symbols weak to paint the force with which he passed.

XXIII.

His sabre never through the grisly shade
Falls, but it smites; nor smites without a wound;
Nor wounds, but straight it kills; should more be said,
The truth would like romance or falsehood sound.
Pain he dissembles, or he has not found,
Or scorns the blows which feebler arms imprint;
Yet oft his burganet of steel rings round
Like loud alarm-bells with the lively dint
Of pole-axe, spear, or sword, and sparkles like a flint.

XXIV.

Just as his single sword to flight delivers
This foremost phalanx, a gigantic deed,
Like a sea swelled with thousand mountain-rivers,
His rushing Arabs to the charge succeed.
Then the scared Franks flew tent-ward at full speed,
The' audacious Victor following as they fled;
And with them, rapt sublime on his black steed,
Entering the camp-gate, he on all sides spread
Havoc, and grief, and pain; loud wailings, rage, and dread.

XXV.

High on the Soldan's helm, in scales of pearl,
With writhen neck, raised paws, outflying wings,
And tail rolled downward, ending in a curl,
A rampant dragon grinned malignant things:
Its lips frothed poison; brandishing three stings,
You almost heard its hiss; at every stroke
Heaped on its crest, through all its livid rings
It seemed the monster into motion woke,
Spit forth its spiteful fire, and belched Tartareous smoke.

XXVI.

Such and so Gorgon-like the Soldan's form
Showed by those fires to the beholders' sight,
As Ocean tossing in a midnight storm
To sailors, with her million waves alight.
Some give their timid trembling feet to flight;
Some, their brave hands to the revenging blade;
And still the' infuriate Anarch of the Night
Increased the risks by darkening them in shade,
And to the midnight winds tumultuous discord brayed.

XXVII.

Of those who showed in this tremendous hour
The stoutest heart, was old Latinus, bred
On Tiber's banks; toils had not quelled his power,—
He stood an oak with all its leaves unshed,
Green, though in age; five sons to war he led,
Who, nobly envying his exploits sublime,
His steps attended with unequal tread;
In iron armours they their unripe prime,
And their yet growing limbs clothed, long before their time.

XXVIII.

The sire's example whets their souls to slake
In blood their eager wrath; "And come," he cries,
"Come where ye see yon tyrannous proud Snake
Devour the crowd that from his fierceness flies.
Let not the sanguine crimes and butcheries
Which he on others perpetrates, unbrace
Your usual courage; fame through peril lies;
And honour, O my boys, itself is base,
Which no surmounted toils of jeopardy aggrace!"

XXIX.

So the fierce Lioness her tawny whelps,
Ere mane invests their neck, or nails their paws,
Ere time with power their native malice helps,
Or teeth and whiskers jag their horrid jaws,
Leads sternly with her to the sylvan wars,
And by her own inflames their savage moods
Against the hunter who to flight o'erawes
The weaker beasts, and insolent intrudes
Upon the holy gloom and quiet of her woods.

XXX.

At once before, beside him, and behind,
The sire and his imprudent little crew,
As though incited by one heart and mind,
In sudden impulse on the Soldan flew;
Five long sharp lances they or thrust or threw;
But his, the eldest son in daring vein
Rashly abandoned, and with ardour drew
The keen-edged sword, presuming, but in vain,
The warrior's prancing steed at vantage to have slain.

XXXI.

But as a cliff, exposed to storms, which towers,
Smit by a sea that ever howls and raves,
Firm in itself, sustains the wrath of showers,
Heaven's hail, fire, thunder, winds, and mountain waves:
So the strong Soldan lifts his front, so braves,
Unshaken in his seat, the' encounter weak
Of sword and spear: himself from harm he saves;
And of the son that on his steed would wreak
Revenge, the head disparts, betwixt the eyes and cheek.

XXXII.

Fond Amarante, to aid the falling youth,
Stretched forth his pious arm; Oh zeal misplaced!
Vain tenderness, and inconsiderate ruth!
That to his brother's ruin he must haste
To join his own! twined fondly round the waist,
That arm the Turkish sabre from his side
Lopt off,—down sank embracer and embraced;
And lip to lip, with melancholy pride,
Mixing their last faint sighs, like drooping roses died.

XXXIII.

Then, having cut Sabino's lance in twain,
That vext him from afar, he spurred his horse,
Which, bounding on him with a loosened rein,
O'erturned and trampled so without remorse
On his fair breast, that from the youthful corse
In dreadful throes the spirit passed forlorn;
Sorely repining at its foul divorce
From those delightful visions which adorn,
With such sweet hues, the birth of Boyhood's fresh Maymorn.

XXXIV.

But Picus and Laurentes yet had life;
Twins, born so similar in face and size,
Their persons oft set strangers at sweet strife,
And caused fond error in their parents' eyes:
The' illusion now, which with an art so nice
Nature had raised, Rage disenchants to dust;
The sabre harshly cancels all disguise:
One through the heart the savage Soldan thrust,
And one he sundered quite, and left a breathless bust.

XXXV.

The father (ah, no father now!) bereft
Of his brave infants in so short a space,
Felt his own death in those five deaths, which left
To him no scion of his name or race:
In such sharp agonies how strength could brace
His aged heart, or reason aid his brain
Still to live on and combat face to face,
I know not; but perhaps he saw not plain
The looks, the dying pangs, and paleness of the slain.

XXXVI.

Perchance the Night with friendly pinions dim
Hid half their anguish from the parent's view;
Still he felt conquest would be nought to him,
Unless with full revenge he perished too:
Then of his own blood prodigal he grew,
And of the Soldan's than a bird of prey
More greedily voracious: nor well knew
Which best his passionate desire would pay—
Or to be killed outright, or suffer on, and slay.

XXXVII.

But cried aloud: "Is then this arm so frail,
So scorned as old, or ridiculed as dead,
That all its efforts do not yet avail,
To call down wrath on my defenceless head?"
He said, and hurled with fury as he said,
His spear at the majestic homicide;
Straight to the mark the whizzing weapon fled,
Shivered both plate and mail, and pierced his side;
Whence the bright blood outgushed, and all his armour dyed.

XXXVIII.

Roused by the wound, the Turk against him drove,
Sternly severe; his sword quick passage found
Through the knight's mail—the target first it clove,
Which seven bull-hides in vain encompassed round,
And in his bowels sheathed its point profound:
The forcible assault from saddle pushed
The hapless knight; he sighed, and from his wound,
And from his mouth a purple vomit gushed,
That all with blood the sands, with blood the herbage blushed.

XXXIX.

But as an Alpine oak which scorned the strength
Of Aquilo and Eurus, firm and sound,
By some unusual wind torn up at length,
Down tumbles, widely ravaging around
The pines and crashing cedars, so to ground
Latinus fell, and to destruction drew
More foes than one round whom his arms he wound;
Fit end for one so brave! that overthrew,
E'en when o'erthrown himself, and e'en when slaughtered, slew.

XL.

Whilst wreaking thus his inward hate, the Turk
Broke his long fast of battle, in their turn
His active Arabs in their barbarous work
Make quick despatch, and all resistance spurn:
Henry, the English knight, and Olopherne,
The proud Bavarian, stretched on earth supine,
Expire beneath thy hand, Dragutes stern!
Gilbert and Philip, Ariadene! by thine,
Born in fair castles both, beside the enchanting Rhine.

XLI.

Albatzar's mace Ernesto slew; the blade
Of Algazel, Engérlan; but to tell
What various modes of death the field displayed,
And the ignoble multitudes that fell,
Mocks all attempt; at the first "Lillah" yell
And blast of trumpets, in his martial bed
Godfrey was woke, was up, was armed, in selle;
Gathered a massy squadron; at their head
Placed himself; ranged their ranks; and on to battle led.

XLII.

He, when he heard the uproar that was raised
Grow momently more wild, was well advised
That the marauding wanderers of the waste
In sudden insult had the camp surprised;
Having by frequent message been apprised,
That they the regions round for spoil laid bare;
This well he knew; but never had surmised,
That such wild vagabonds would ever dare
To beard, in very deed, the lion in his lair.

XLIII.

But riding on, he heard alarum given
Elsewhere—"To arms! to arms!" the trumpet jars
And barbarous howls all horribly to heaven,
Loud as the clang and whirl of countless cars,
Ascend, and in loud thunder climb the stars;
This was Clorinda, who to battle hied
With the king's troops, and, terrible as Mars,
Argantes, breathing fury at her side;
To Guelph, his viceroy, then the Captain turned, and cried:

XLIV.

"Hear what new war-cry swells from yonder part
That lies towards the hills and city! there
We need thy utmost courage, strength, and art,
The sallier's first insulting shocks to bear:
Go then! to guard that quarter be thy care;
And with thee half of these my troops array
In closest cube; whilst I myself prepare,
Where southward the hoarse horns defiance bray,
To front the hostile charge, and stand at desperate bay."

XLV.

The plan marked out, to right and left they wheeled,
By different paths, an equal risk to face—
Guelph to the hills, and Godfrey to the field
Where now the Arabs hold his men in chase;
Proceeding, he gains strength; at every pace,
To his uplifted standard numbers throng;
Which, by the time he reached the special place
Where the grim Soldan slaughtering passed along,
Had grown a mighty host, firm, massy, stout, and strong.

XLVI.

Thus, humbly gliding from his native mountain,
The Po at first fills not his narrow bed;
But aye the more, the farther from the fountain,
With added forces his proud waters spread;
O'er the burst banks his curled brows tower; with tread
Conquering and swift, he takes his giant leap
Down the 'whelmed vales, and with his horned head
Rebuts the Adrian waves; nor in his sweep,
Seems to pay tax, but wage fierce warfare with the deep.

XLVII.

When Godfrey saw his troops affrighted fly,
He spurred, and shouted: "Shame! what new disgrace,
What dastard fear is this? tell me but why
You run, behold at least who gives you chase;
A heartless crowd, irresolute and base,
Reeds shaken by a breeze; they neither know
To strike a gallant soldier to his face,
Nor take a stroke in front; your faces shew!
That will alone suffice to scare the craven foe!"

XLVIII.

This said, he spurred his horse, and onward flew
Where he beheld the Soldan's shining snake;
Through blood and dust; through sabres not a few,
And groves of spears his progress did he make;
With stroke and onset he dissolved and brake
Ranks the most strong, and masses most compact;
And every where to earth was seen to shake,
With a bold arm, attacking or attacked,
Warrior and war-horse, shield and shielded cataphract.

XLIX.

O'er the mixt heap of men and arms made black
With bloodshed, bounds his barb, of nothing shy;
The' intrepid Soldan saw the coming wrack,
And neither fled, nor had the wish to fly;
But spurred abroad to meet him, and on high
Raised his Damascus scimetar to smite
The moment they should meet;—thus drew they nigh;
Oh what two Peers did fortune there unite,
From the world's wide extremes, to prove their matchless might!

L.

Fury in narrow lists with virtue strove
For Asia's boundless empire: who can tell
The fierceness of the fight! how sabre drove
At sword! how swift and strong the strokes that fell!
Their dreadful deeds I pass unsung; they dwell
With unessential Night, whose awful screen
Hid them from notice! they were deeds that well
Deserved a noonday sun, and to have been
By the whole world at once in cloudless glory seen.

LI.

The Christians, cheered by such a glorious guide,
Wax bold, and push the battle to the gate;
And round the dragon-crested homicide,
Dense grows the crowd armed best in proof of plate:
Foot prest to foot, no ground repining hate
Concedes; nor this nor that side wins or quails;
Faithful and Infidel alike elate,
The victor falls, the vanquished now prevails;
And life and grisly death are hung in equal scales.

LII.

As with like rage and strength to battle fly
Here the strong South wind, there the ruffian North,—
They cuff, they rave, they clash; and sea and sky
To neither yield themselves, though lashed to froth,
But cloud for cloud, and wave for wave send forth:
So fought both hosts beneath the hideous shade—
Unyielding, firm, sharp, obstinate, and wroth;
Front shocking front, in horrible parade,
Shield with shield, helm with helm, and blade loud clashed with blade.

LIII.

Nor toward the City shock the charging hosts
Meanwhile with less loud uproar; nor less dense
Glooms their array; a thousand thousand ghosts
And Stygian fiends the cope of heaven immense
Fill, and in Pagan bosoms breathe intense
Resolve and fortitude; that none desire,
Or even think to stir a footstep thence;
Whilst with new rage Argantes they inspire,
Enough inflamed before with his accustomed fire.

LIV.

He too the guards repulsed, and at one bound
Clear o'er the deep fosse and high ramparts leaped,—
Levelled the outworks, smoothed the lofty mound,
And with the Franks he slew, the trenches heaped;
So that his knights with ease pursuing, steeped
The ground with gore, and to a purple red
Dyed the white tents; like praise Clorinda reaped
Fast by his side, or following where he sped;
With much disdain that she the' assailants did not head.

LV.

And now the Christians were in flight, when Guelph
The field of slaughter opportunely gained;
He made them turn their faces; he himself
Bore the foe's onset, and his rage restrained.
Thus fought they; and on both sides the blood rained
In equal showers, and equally they earned
The dreary laurels of revenge distained:
His eyes meanwhile where hot the battle burned,
From his empyreal seat the King of Glory turned.

LVI.

There He abides; there full of truth and love,
Creates, adorns, and governs all that be,
High o'er this narrow-bounded world, above
The reach of reason and of sense; there He
Presides from all to all eternity,
Sublime on solemn throne, unbuilt with hands,
Three Lights in One! whilst in meek ministry,
Beneath his feet, with Fate and Nature stands
Motion, and He whose glass weighs out her golden sands:

LVII.

With Place and Fortune, who, like magic dust,
The glory, gold, and power of things below,
Tosses and whirls in her capricious gust,
Reckless of human joy and human woe:
There He in splendour shrouds himself from show,
Which not e'en holiest eyes unshaded see;
And round about him, in a glorious bow,
Millions of happy souls keep jubilee,—
Equals alike in bliss, though differing in degree.

LVIII.

As the loud harmony of angel hymns
Joyous through heaven's resounding palace rolled,
Michael he summoned, whose seraphic limbs
Sparkle and burn in adamant and gold;
And thus serenely spake: "Dost thou behold
How from the' abyss yon fiends are risen, to spoil
The faithful flock beloved of my fold?
Seest thou them, armed with malice, how they toil
In wrack and uproar wide those kingdoms to embroil?

LIX.

"Go! bid them all avaunt, and leave the care
Of war to warriors, as is just and right;
Nor tempest and infect the earth and air
Longer, with their foul charms and evil flight;
But bid them back to the abyss of night,
Their merited abode of wail and pain;
There to torment themselves, and wreak their spite
On the lost spirits subject to their chain;
Lo, this my bidding is, and thus do I ordain!"

LX.

This said, the wing'd Archangel low inclined
In reverent awe before the' Almighty's throne;
Then spread his golden pinions on the wind,
And, swifter than all thought, away is flown;
He passed the regions which the Blessed own
For their peculiar home, a glorious sphere
Of fire and splendour; next, the milder zone
Of whitest crystal; and the circle clear,
Which, gemmed with stars, whirls round, and charms his tuneful ear.

LXI.

To left, distinct in influence and in phase,
He sees bright Jove and frigid Saturn roll;
And those five other errant fires, whose maze
Of motion some angelic spark of soul
Directs with truth unerring to the goal:
Through fields of endless sunshine he arrives
Where thunders, winds and showers from pole to pole
Waste and renew, as each for mastery strives,
Green Earth, that fades to bloom, and to decay revives.

LXII.

The horrors of the storm, the shadowy glooms,
With his immortal fans he shakes away;
The splendour falling from his face illumes
Night with a sunshine luminous as day:
So after rain in April or in May,
The sun with colours fine of every hue
Paints the moist clouds, green, crimson, gold, and grey;
Cleaving the liquid sky's calm bosom blue,
So shines a shooting star in momentary view.

LXIII.

But when he came where the malignant Fiends
Inflamed the Turks, he checked his swift career;
Balanced his vigorous pinions on the winds;
Then spoke, and, speaking, shook his dreadful spear:
"Not yet, Accursed! have ye learned to fear
That God whose blazing thunderbolts of yore
Scorched your gay wings, and to the nether sphere
Smote you? have ages, spent in torments sore,
Left you rebellious still, and haughty as before?

LXIV.

"Lo! heaven hath sworn, that to the Cross shall nod
Yon towers, and Sion ope her portal gates;
Who shall withstand the oracles of God;
Provoke his wrath, and fight against the Fates!
Depart, ye Cursed! to your native states,
The regions of perpetual death and pain,
To you devote; the fiery surge awaits
Your coming, and rears bright its blazing mane;
There urge your impious wars, your triumphs there ordain!

LXV.

"There o'er the guilty tyrannise; there wreak
Your rage, and muster all the pangs ye know,
Mid racks of iron, shaken chains, the shriek
And gnashing of interminable woe!"
This heard, they fled; whom he perceived more slow,
The Angel, with his fatal lance divine,
Goaded and drove; with sullen groans they go;
The realms of smiling light and golden shine
Of the gay morning-stars reluctant to resign.

LXVI.

And spread toward Hell their dragon wings, to tease,
And tear with sharper pangs the tortured ghosts;
Not swallows in such flocks pass o'er the seas,
Gathering to milder suns and warmer coasts;
Not leaves in woods, when Autumn's first night-frosts
Nip their seared beauty, in such numbers e'er
Heap the low valleys: freed from their foul hosts,
The joyous earth shook off her black despair,
And cheered with flowers the ground, with harmony the air.

LXVII.

Yet not for this the valour or the ire
In fierce Argantes' breast decayed or sank;
Though there Alecto breathed not now her fire,
Nor with her whip of scorpions lashed his flank;
But evermore, where frowned the closest rank,
He keenly plied his sharp, vindictive blade;
He mowed down Briton, Greek, Italian, Frank;
The proud, the mean, the potent equal made;
And the plumed liege beside his plumeless vassal laid.

LXVIII.

Not far behind, the Camp Clorinda strowed
With severed limbs, and with as keen a gust;
Through Berlinger's proud heart, the warm abode
Of life and sense, her scimetar she thrust—
True to her wish, and to her aim so just,
Its red point issued from the back; she left
The hapless warrior grovelling in the dust;
Then through the navel Albino bereft
Of life, and Gallo's skull, though helmed, in sunder cleft.

LXIX.

Gernier's right hand, that gashed her as she passed,
She cut sheer off; which yet did not abstain
From grasping with its quivering fingers fast,
Half animate, the sword, and on the plain
Glid like a snake's lithe tail, that, cut in twain
By some stung passenger, twists to and fro,
And fiercely strives to reunite, in vain:
Thus lopt, he writhed; the Heroine left him so,
Then at Achilles flew, and dealt a nobler blow.

LXX.

Betwixt the nape and neck the sabre smit,
And cut the nerves and sinews that sustained
The head, which, falling, on the earth alit,
And in foul dust the beauteous face profaned,
Ere the trunk fell; erect the trunk remained,
(A sight of horror!) nor its seat forsook;
Till the sagacious steed, no longer reined
By the strong hand that wont its pride to brook,
Rampant from off its back the useless burden shook.

LXXI.

Whilst thus the dauntless Heroine gored and scourged
The Western Lords, and thinned their serried lines,
Her steed against her brave Gildippe urged,
Nor made less slaughter on the Saracines:
Their sex the same, the same wild beauty shines
In each; in each the fire of glory glows;
At her courageous rival each repines;
But face to face in battle thus to close,
Fate grants it not—their lives are owed to mightier foes.

LXXII.

Here one, and there the other shocked and charged,
Nor this nor that could clear the fighting crowd;
But generous Guelph pressed forward, and discharged
At his fair foe, with broad-sword raised, a proud
Aspiring stroke; it lingered not, but ploughed
Her side, and purple turned its purest white;
Heroic scorn her flashing smile avowed—
She with a thrust sharp answer made the knight,
And 'twixt the ribs his wound did passing well requite.

LXXIII.

A second, stronger blow Lord Guelpho strook,
Which erred, as tall Osmida, passing by,
By chance upon his turbaned forehead took
The wound unmeant, gashed deep from eye to eye:
But here, for glory fierce, the company
Which Guelph commanded, interposing, drew
In numbers round; whilst, fixed to do or die,
Of the pressed Pagans crowds on crowds thronged too,
So that the maddening fight more wild each moment grew.

LXXIV.

Meanwhile Aurora sweet her roseate face
Shows from the balcony of heaven; and lo!
Burst from his bonds, and fervent from disgrace.
Where the press thickens and the tumults grow,
Comes Argillan, abrupt; from top to toe
Sheathed in such arms as chance for the assault
First offers—good or bad, he cares not, so
They do but serve him to amend his fault,
And by new deeds to praise his tarnished name exalt.

LXXV.

As when a wild steed in the stalls of kings
Fed for the battle, from his manger breaks;
O'er vales, o'er mountains to his loves he springs,
Seeks the known meads, or to the river takes;
His curled mane dances on his back; he shakes
His haughty neck aloft; his broad hoofs sound
Like the black thunder; with the bright fire-flakes
Struck forth from his swift trampling, burns the ground,
And with his neighings shrill he fills the world around.

LXXVI.

So issues Argillan; his fierce eyes blaze,
Intrepid shews his brow, sublimely strong
His lifted arm; his swift feet leave no trace,
Scarce stir the light dust as they bound along:
And now the turbaned multitudes among,
He lifts his voice like one that laughs to scorn
All jeopardy and fear: "Oh ye vile throng!
Dregs of the world! what impudence has drawn
You to a field of war, amidst wild asses born?

LXXVII.

"'T is not for you the shield and battle blade
To shake aloft, or wear the warrior's weed;
But to commit, half naked and afraid,
Wounds to the wind, your safety to the steed!
All your achievements and brave schemes, indeed,
Are wrought by night, blind Night your sole resource
And tower of strength! now she has fled, you need
Valour and arms of more efficient force;
To what kind guardian Power will you now have recourse?

LXXVIII.

Whilst thus he spoke, on Algazel's bare cheek
So fierce a stroke he took at bold surprise,
As clove his jaws, and, as he sought to speak,
Cut short his answering accents; o'er the eyes
Of the poor wretch a misty horror flies;
An icy frost runs chill from vein to vein;
He groans, he falls, and in the agonies
Of death, still filled with fury and disdain,
Bites with his gnashing teeth the' abominated plain.

LXXIX.

By various deaths then Agricalt he slew,
Strong Muleasses, stronger Saladine;
Then at Aldiazel exulting flew,
And clove the haughty Arab to the chine:
Next wounding in the breast bold Ariadine,
He beat him down, and with fierce vaunts of pride
Taunted the youth; he, stretched on earth supine,
His languid eyes uplifting ere he died,
Thus to his glorying words presagingly replied:

LXXX.

"Not thou, whoe'er thou art, shalt glory long
In this my death, short-sighted homicide!
Like chance awaits thee; soon a hand more strong
Shall stretch thee pale and breathless by my side!"
Grimly he smiled; and "Of my fate," he cried.
"Let Heaven take care; meanwhile die thou, and fill
The maw of birds and hounds!" then with a stride
Of haughtier vaunt, he pressed him with his heel,
And drew at once away the spirit and the steel.

LXXXI.

Mixed with the lancers rode the Soldan's page—
His favourite page, angelically fair;
On whose smooth chin the flowers that vernal age
Strews in its deepening ripeness yet were rare;
A poet's fancy would the pearls compare
That in moist silver his warm cheeks enchase,
To dews on April roses; to his hair,
Untrimmed, the golden gathered dust gave grace,
And even severe disdain shewed sweet in such a face.

LXXXII.

His steed for whiteness matched the snows that drift
On the high Apennines; the lights that glance
In Arctic skies, are not more live and swift
Than he to run, to twine, to wheel, to prance:
Grasped in the midst he shook a Moorish lance,
And a short sabre graced his side; with bold
Barbaric pomp, as in antique romance,
He shone in purple, glorious to behold,
Fretted with blazing gems, and damasked o'er with gold.

LXXXIII.

Whilst the fair boy whose mind the new delight
Of glory charmed, with unchecked conquest warm,
Hither and thither in his childish sleight
Drove the bewildered crowd with little harm,
Like a grim lion couching cool and calm,
Fierce Argillano to his motions lent
Regard; watched well his time; then raised his arm,—
Loud whizzed the lance, and, true to his intent,
At stealth the white steed slew, and down the rider went.

LXXXIV.

At his sweet face, where suppliant pity mild
For mercy, mercy, vainly made appeal,
The victor-churl struck, hoping to have spoiled
That masterpiece of beauty; but the steel,
Humaner than the man, appeared to feel
Pain for the wrong, and lighted flat; alas,
What could it serve him! soon his cruel skill
The fault retrieved,—he made a surer pass;
Deep gashed the sword his cheek, and stretched him on the grass.

LXXXV.

The Soldan, who at no great distance fought,
By Godfrey in the battle kept at bay,
Turned his spurred steed the moment he had caught
Sight of the risk, and through the wedged array
Of charged and charging squadrons clove his way,
And came in time—for vengeance, not for aid;
Oh grief! Oh anguish! he beheld his gay
And late so smiling Lesbin lowly laid,
Like a fine flower cut down, and drooping undecayed.

LXXXVI.

His graceful head fell with an air so meek,
Life's flitting sunshine languished into night
O'er his blue eye, and on the suffering cheek,
Strewed by Death's Angel in his love, the white
Rose breathed so sweetly, that, in pride's despite,
His marble heart was touched; and from his brain,
In midst of rage, the tears gushed big and bright:
What! can he weep, who saw his ancient reign
Pass by without one tear to mark his parting pain?

LXXXVII.

He weeps! but when the smoking sword he views
In Lesbin's blood imbrued, all softness dies;
His spirit is ablaze; his rage renews;
The scorched tears stagnate in his stormy eyes,
That flash with fire; on Argillan he flies,
Lifts his drawn sword, and splits from thong to thong,
First the raised buckler with his proud device,
And next his helmed head—a stroke most strong,
Worthy a Sultan's scorn who writhed beneath such wrong.

LXXXVIII.

Nor thus content, he from his steed alights,
And makes fierce battle with the corse he slew;
Like a struck mastiff, that in vengeance bites
The stone some passenger in anger threw:
O vain relief of anguish! to pursue
With rage the dust insensible to pain:
But meanwhile Godfrey and his circling crew
Of chevaliers, against the Soldan's train
Spent not in vain their powers, struck not their blows in vain.

LXXXIX.

A thousand Turks were there from head to heel
Sheathed in fine mail, with plated shields; their frame,
Untired by toil, was stubborn as the steel
That armed their limbs; their daring souls the same,—
Versed in all movements of the martial game:
The Soldan's ancient body-guard, they passed
With him to the Arabian wilds, when came
His evil hour, and to his fortunes fast
Adhered through bright and dark, confederates to the last.

XC.

These, pressed together close in firmest rank,
Little or nothing to the Franks gave place;
Amongst them Godfrey charged, and in the flank
Wounded Rostene, Corcutes in the face;
From Selin, lifting high his Moorish mace,
He shore the head; then to Rosseno drew,
Lopt off both arms, and in that piteous case
Left him to die, whilst on the rest he flew;
And many a Paynim maimed, and many a Paynim slew.

XCI.

Whilst thus he strikes, and on his moony shield
Takes all their strokes, invincible as bold,
Nor in one point the gruff barbarians yield,
Their hopes yet ardent, nor their courage cold,
Fresh clouds of drifted dust ride nigh, that hold
Lightnings of war within their womb; and lo!
Nearer and nearer as their skirts are rolled,
A sudden shine of arms moves to and fro,
That fills with deep alarm the bosoms of the foe.

XCII.

Here fifty knights to battle came, who bore
In argent field the Red-cross of their Lord;
Had I a hundred mouths and tongues, yea, more,
Throat, lungs, and breath of brass to sound abroad
Their deeds, I could not fittingly record
What numbers lifeless sank upon the plain
In their first charge; the valiant Turk that warred,
And Arab that warred not, but sought to gain
The gates for flight, alike was met, was pierced, was slain.

XCIII.

Grief, Scorn, Pain, Horror, Cruelty, and Fear,
Ran shrieking on all sides; and you might see
Death the Destroyer stride from van to rear,
In thousand guises, butchering those that flee;
Conquering the brave; and with a bloody sea
Billowing the ground:—the king with many a knight
Had issued from the walls, in certainty
Of full success, and with the morning light
Beheld the subject plain and uncompleted fight.

XCIV.

But when, no longer dubious of the' event,
He the main army saw in disarray,
He bade the trumpet sound retreat, and sent
Repeated heralds to command, and pray
Argantes and Clorinda back; but they,
Intoxicate with blood, and blind with ire,
Long time refused his message to obey;
At length they yield, but jointly still aspire
To orb their scattered troops, and in firm rank retire.

XCV.

But who a coward host can rule or guide?
The flight is taken, and the fierce foe nigh;
One casts his shield, and one his sword aside,
As more encumbered than defenced thereby:
Stretched from the South towards the Western sky,
A rugged valley winds, abrupt and deep,
Near Salem,—thither do the many fly,
In crowds on crowds rude rushing down the steep,—
Dark clouds of dust arise, and to the city sweep.

XCVI.

Whilst down the hill precipitate they ran,
The Christian host vast slaughter of them made;
But when they crossed the valley, and began
To climb the rocks in bowshot of the aid
Sent by the king, his forces Guelpho stayed;
For, at such disadvantages of height,
He would not risk the' uncertain escalade;
Thus safe within the walls, the king from flight
Received the small remains of that unprosperous fight.

XCVII.

All that to human efforts Nature grants,
The Soldan now had done; with sweat and gore
His members are bedewed; he gasps and pants;
Sharp anguish shakes his frame, he can no more:
Weak grew his arm beneath the shield it bore;
His red right hand, with slaughter overspent,
Scarce waved the sword; that sword, so sharp before,
Now only bruised, so blunted, hacked, and bent,
It long had lost the use for which the shape was lent.

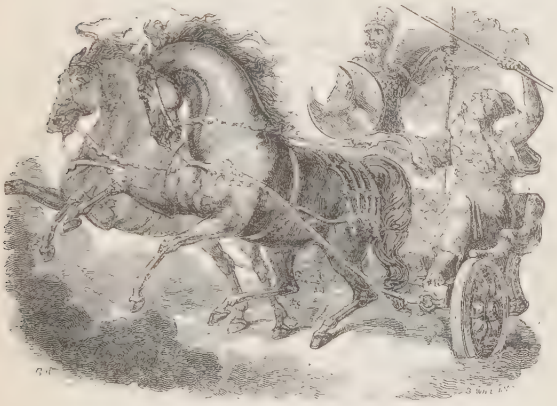
XCVIII.

Feeling thus faint, he hesitating stands
In dubious mood, 'twixt warring counsels tost,—
Or should he perish by his own proud hands,
Since hope afresh was wrecked and honour lost,
So none the glory of his death could boast,
Or, should he care to save his life, and flee
Far from the field where lay his vanquished host?
"Fortune," at last he cried, "I yield to thee;
And let my flight the seal of thy scorned conquest be:—

XCIX.

"Let Godfrey view once more, and smile to view
My second exile;—soon shall he again
See me in arms returned, to vex anew
His haunted peace and never stable reign;
Yield I do not; eternal my disdain
Shall be as are my wrongs; though fires consume
My dust, immortal shall my hate remain;
And aye my naked ghost fresh wrath assume,
Through life a foe most fierce, but fiercer from the tomb!"

CANTO X



Stanza xv.

ARGUMENT.

Before the Soldan, as he sleeps, Ismene
Presents himself, and, secretly conveys
The prince to Sion, where his courage keen,
And the unbending firmness he displays,
Soon cheers the drooping tyrant; Godfrey prays
Of his stray knights the story of their woes;
And when the fear which on his spirit preys
For lost Rinaldo finds a happy close,
His sons' renown and worth the gifted seer foreshows.

I.

Whilst yet he spoke, a steed from battle strayed,
Came bounding up to him, on whose free rein
A hot and hasty hand the Soldan laid,
And leaped across him, faint with toil and pain:
The dragon crest, that with such length of train
Of late in air rose dreadful, shorn away,
Leaves the proud helm undignified and plain;
Rent are his glorious robes, his trappings gay;
Nor has he left one sign of pomp or kingly sway.

II.

As from the wattled pens the villain wolf
Chased out, scuds darkling to the forests hoar,
Which, though he well has filled the ravenous gulf
Of his vast stomach with the flesh and gore
Of many a victim, thirsting yet for more,
Laps off the bloody froth his jaws distil,
With greedy tongue; e'en so the Soldan bore
From that night's slaughter an unsated will,
For boundless fields of blood athirst and hungering still.

III.

As was his fortune, from the drizzly cloud
Of sounding arrows that around him flew,
From groves of lances, ranks of swords, a crowd
Of hostile knights, securely he withdrew;
And ever as he rode, unknown to view,
The most untrod and wildest ways he sought;
Whilst, unresolved what measure to pursue,
With each fresh billow of conflicting thought,
Fluctuates his stormy mind, still fixing, fixed on nought.

IV.

At length to Egypt he resolved to hie,
Where now the Caliph his vast hosts arrayed;
And, joined with him, the arms and fate to try
Of a fresh conflict; this decision made,
In his mid course no longer he delayed,
But with the speed his urgency demands,
Rode for the South; he needed none in aid,
To shew the way where on the seashore sands,
Right strongly towered, the town of antique Gaza stands

V.

Nor, though sharp pangs upon his members seize,
And his weak frame grows weary, will he lay
His arms aside to taste the bliss of ease,
But in sore travel spends the total day,
Till from his sight the landscape swims away,
And shadows tinge the sky's sweet colours brown;
He then alights; then swathes, as best he may,
His thrilling wounds; and from the lofty crown
Of overnodding palms ambrosial fruit shakes down.

VI.

And, thus refreshed, on the bare earth he sought,
His head reclining on his shield, to gain
Rest to his wearied side, and still the thought,
The restless thought that tired his busy brain:
But every moment miserable pain
Stung the sick slumberer on his couch of thorn;
Oft a swift horror shot from vein to vein;
Whilst by the inward vultures, Grief and Scorn,
His sad heart still was pierced, his liver fiercely torn.

VII.

At length, when Night had reached her deepest noon,
And lulled in solemn trance all things around,
Conquered with weariness, in softest swoon
His vexing memories and regrets he drowned:
Brief languid quiet his shut eyelids crowned,
And a benumbing torpor, dull but dear,
Its soothing coils about his members wound;—
Whilst yet he slept, a sudden voice severe,
Toned like the thunder, thus resounded in his ear:

VIII.

"Solyman! Solyman! this lazy rest
To a more suited time reserve; still groans
The land thou' hast ruled—a weeping slave, oppressed
Beneath the yoke of foreign myrmidons:
And sleep'st thou here, upon a soil that owns
So deep a vestige of thy late disgrace?
Hast thou the sad remembrance lost, whose bones
Untombed it holds? is it in such a place
That thou must idly wait to give the morning chase?"

IX.

The Soldan, waking, raised his eyes, and viewed
A man beneath a hundred winters bent;
Who, with a writhen staff from the wild wood,
Guided his feeble steps where'er he went:
"And who art thou?" he uttered, malcontent,
"Officious goblin! whose ill ministry
Is—thus to haunt lone passengers o'erspent,
And scare off their brief sleeps? take wing, and flee!
What is my proud revenge, what my disgrace to thee!"

X.

"I," said the bearded Sire, "am one to whom
Is known in part the scope of your new scheme;
And as a friend more watchful of your doom
And cherished interests than you yet may deem,
I come; nor let my bitter sarcasm seem
Severe in vain; scorn is the quickening spur
Of virtue and ennobling self-esteem;
Let not my accents then, which serve to stir
The latent fire to flame, your anger thus incur.

XI.

"Though now (if I your purpose read aright)
Your steps to the Egyptian Court incline,
A dangerous journey and a fruitless flight,
If yet you pause not in your rash design,
My mystic art, from many a hostile sign,
Predicts; since, whether you remain or go,
No less the forces of the Saracine
Will march; and there, what valour can you shew,
Or how your genius use against our common foe?

XII.

"But, if you trust to me, within those walls
Which fast the Latin arms in leaguer gird,
In open day, and to the inmost halls
Of Salem, without sword, I pledge my word
To bring you safe, unnoticed and unheard;
There take your fill of glory and delight;
With arms and zeal to fit exploits transferred,
Defend her towers, till, to renew the fight,
The hosts of Egypt come, and conquest crowns your right!"

XIII.

Whilst thus he spoke, the fierce Turk with amaze
The ancient man's electric aspect eyed;
His voice was like a spell; and from his face,
And from his savage mind all signs of pride
And rage he banished: "Father!" he replied,
"This instant I am ready, I am swift
To follow wheresoe'er thy will may guide;
That counsel's best which promises to lift
My steps with most of toil to Danger's loftiest clift!"

XIV.

The Ancient praised his zeal, and straightway poured
Into his smarting wounds, which Night had chilled,
A sovereign juice that soon his strength restored,
Stanched the red ichor, the sore bruises healed;
And, seeing now the sun begin to gild
The orient clouds yet purple from their play
Round young Aurora, "Rise from off thy shield!"
He said, "'t is time to go; since breaking day,
Which calls the world to toil, already lights our way."

XV.

His magic Car stood ready at command,—
They mount; the Stranger, shunning all delay,
Shook the rich reins, and with a master's hand
Lashed the black steeds, that, ramping, scoured away
So swift, that not the sands a trace betray
Of hoof or wheel; they vanish as they come,
Proudly precipitant, and snort, and neigh,
Paw the parched soil, and, ardent for their home
Champ their resplendent bits all white with fleecy foam,

XVI.

Away! away! and still as fast and far
They fly, the air to clouds condensing rolled
In heaps around, and draped the' enchanted car,
Yet not a wreath could human eye behold;
Nor stone nor rock, (surprising to be told,)
Hurled from the most magnificent machine,
Might of its crapelike volume pierce the fold!
Yet by the two within were all things seen—
The clouds, air, earth, and sky, all rosily serene.

XVII.

With wrinkling forehead and arched brow, the knight
On cloud and car gazed stupidly intent,—
Its wheels seemed wings, and its career a flight,
So swift and soundless on its way it went
O'er the smooth soil; the Sage plenipotent,
Who saw his raptured spirit stand aghast
At the sublime and mystical portent,
From his abstraction roused him; voice at last
Came to his lips, from which these eager questions passed

XVIII.

"Whoe'er thou art that, passing mortal man,
Mak'st pliant Nature thus thy freaks fulfil,
Who, reading thought and purpose at a scan,
The heart's close chambers rangest at thy will,
Oh! if it be within thy gifted skill,
Far-peeping into Time, to see the shows
Of things yet dark, and spell their good or ill,
Say, prophet! say, what ruin or repose
Do the mysterious stars foredoom from Asia's throes.

XIX.

"But first thy name declare, and by what art
Thou work'st things thus beyond weak Fancy's reach;
For, in this stupor of the mind and heart,
How else can I attend thy wondrous speech?"
The Wizard smiled; "Of that which you beseech,
Part I, at least," said he, "will grant; one page
We may turn over, and its secrets teach;
Ismeno I, the Syrian Archimage,
Named from the magic arts in which I love to' engage.

XX.

"But, Prince, to glance through dark futurity,
And of far fate the' eternal leaves to read,
Were an attempt too arrogant and high,
Nor do the Heavens to man such power concede:
To face the ills and sufferings here decreed,
All spirit, wisdom, strength, let each assume;
For oft the valorous and the wise succeed
In striking brightness from the deepest gloom,
And from the spheres shape out their own triumphant doom.

XXI.

"For thee 't will be a little thing, the powers
And pillars of Frank rule to shake; prepare
Not to flank only, nor to shield the towers,
Which those fierce hosts with such unceasing care
Strongly enclose,—'gainst steel,—'gainst fire lay bare
Thine all unconquerable arm; be bold;
Hope all things, suffer all things, all things dare;
Myself hope much; to thee shall now be told,
What through the mist of years obscurely I behold.

XXII.

"I seem to see, ere many an annual round
Yon dancing planet runs, a Chief arise,
Who shall grace Asia with his deeds renowned,
And with the sceptre of the Ptolemies
Rule fruitful Egypt; on the policies,
Industrious arts, and blessings of his reign,
I 'm mute,—their number pains my straining eyes:
This be content to know, the Christian chain
With equal scorn and strength his hand shall shake in twain.

XXIII.

"Yea! from its very base their rule unjust
Shall in his last proud field uprooted be;
And the lone remnant for their safety trust
A petty rock beside the howling sea,
Protected only by its waves; from thee
This Chief shall spring!" here hushed the prophet's voice
"And oh!" the Turk replied, "thrice happy he,
Destined to such a noble task!" the choice
His vulture thoughts half grudge, yet, whilst they grudge, rejoice.

XXIV.

"Let Fortune," he subjoined, "for good or ill
Come or come not, as is prescribed on high,
She sways not me, but shall behold my will
Unconquered aye, and stedfast as the sky:
First shall the moon from her blue circuit fly;
First shall the stars' immortal footsteps reel
From the path fixed for them to tread, ere I
Swerve but a step to shun her whirling wheel!"
He said, and crimson turned, with scorn and fervent zeal.

XXV.

Thus commune they; and now the plain they pass,
Near which their domes the white pavilions rear;
There what a cruel sight was seen! alas,
In what unnumbered shapes did death appear!
To Solyman's stern eyes a troubled tear
Of grief and passion rose at the survey,
And filled his face with gloom; afar and near,
In what wild havoc, how insulted, lay
His arms and ensigns, feared, so feared of yesterday!

XXVI.

He saw the Franks in carnival o'erspread
The field, oft trampling on the faces pale
Of his slain friends, as from the' unburied dead
They tore the gorgeous vests and shirts of mail,
With rude insulting taunts: down the far vale,
In long, long order, many a funeral quire
Was seen attending with the voice of wail
Bodies beloved, whilst some brought careless fire,
And Turks and Arabs heaped in one commingling pyre.

XXVII.

He deeply sighed, he drew his sword in rage,
And from his seat leaped, eager in their blood
To' avenge the insult; but the Archimage
His mad resolve inflexibly withstood;
And, curbing by rebuke his furious mood,
Made him perforce resume the seat resigned;
Then to the loftiest hills his course pursued,
Baffling the rival pinions of the wind,
Until the hostile tents in distance sank behind.

XXVIII.

Alighting then, the chariot disappeared,
And side by side on foot the travellers went;
Still curtained in the cloud, their course they steered
Down a deep vale of difficult descent,
Till they arrived where to the Occident
Sublime Mount Sion turned its shoulders wide,
In rocks and cliffs fantastically rent;
There paused the Sorcerer, and its fissured side
Coasting from steep to steep, in close perusal eyed.

XXIX.

Scooped in the bosom of the living stone,
Time immemorial, yawns a hollow grot,
Whose mouth, from long disuse, was overgrown
With briers and herbs that mantled all the spot,
By all but the Magician long forgot;
He cleared the way, the entrance he explored,
And, bending low his body, scrupled not
Darkling to creep into the cave, unawed,
Holding his right hand out to guide the Turkish lord.

XXX.

Out then spake Solyman: "What uncouth cave
Is this, through which my stealing steps must glide?
Far nobler passage with my trusty glaive
Would I have cleft, if thou hadst not denied:"
"Reluctant soul!" the Archimage replied,
"Let not thy proud feet spurn the gloomy ways
Which potent Herod has so often tried,—
Which Herod ofttimes trod in ancient days,
Whose deeds in arms are yet the theme of Syrian praise.

XXXI.

"This cave the monarch scooped, when with a power
More strict his froward Jews he wished to bend;
By this he could with ease from yonder tower,
(Then named Antonia from his noble friend,)
Either, invisible to all descend
To the grand Temple, and secure his flight,
If aught of tumult threatened to impend
In the rebellious city, or, by night
Fresh forces introduce, nor shock the public sight.

XXXII.

"This dark and solitary cave, of all
Existent beings but to me is known;
It now shall be our usher to the hall,
Where in divan the mightiest of his throne,
Emir, and sage, and Persic Amazon
Are gathered by the King, who seems to fear,
Somewhat too much, misfortune's angry frown;
Much needed shalt thou come; stand still, give ear,
Then move, at suited time, bold words of lively cheer."

XXXIII.

He said: the Prince no longer now disdains
To enter the strange cavern; but by ways
Where ever-during Night and Silence reigns,
Follows the Wizard through the winding maze
At first low stooping, but the grot in space
Loftier dilates, the farther they explore
Its labyrinthine depths, until they pace
At utmost ease of height the chiselled floor,
And midway soon approach a little grated door.

XXXIV.

Ismeno shot the lock; and to the right
They climbed a staircase, long untrod, to which
A feeble, glimmering, and malignant light
Streamed from the ceiling through a windowed niche;
At length by corridors of loftier pitch
They sallied into day, and access had
To an illumined hall, large, round, and rich;
Where, sceptred, crowned, and in dark purple clad,
Sad sat the pensive King, amidst his Nobles sad.

XXXV.

The Turk, unseen within the hollow cloud,
His eager eyes around th' assembly rolled;
And heard meanwhile the monarch, from his proud
Enamelled seat of elephant and gold,
His changed imaginations thus unfold;
"Oh, ruinous indeed the day gone by
Proved to our rule! my eagle heart is cold;
Cold, O my friends! and, cast from hopes so high,
Egypt is now the all on which we can rely.

XXXVI.

"But well ye see how distant are her arms
From our so pressing exigence, alas,
Our risks! for your advice in these alarms
We all are met,—each speak the thoughts he has:"
He ceased; sad sounds around repining pass,
Like hollow winds in woods when dark the year
Weeps into winter; but, with front of brass,
Lively of look and confident of cheer,
Argantes straight uprose, and hushed each whispering peer.

XXXVII.

"What, most magnificent of Kings! what now?"
Were the first words of the undaunted Knight;
"What trial 's this? who does not know, that thou
Need'st not our judgments to decide aright?
Yet will I say, be all our hopes in fight
Placed in ourselves; and if, as schoolmen tell,
No ills can harm true Virtue, nor affright,
Be that our spear, our shield, our citadel,—
Let us her dictates use, nor love our lives too well.

XXXVIII.

"I say not this as hopeless of the aid,
The most sure aid our Court did late decree;
To doubt the promises my lord has made,
Were neither just in you, nor right in me:
But this I say, because I wish to see
In some of us an energy more brave;
A soul prepared for whatsoe'er may be—
To scorn the chance that guides us to the grave,
And look on victory still as our predestined slave."

XXXIX.

Thus spoke Argantes; nothing more he chose
To say, as useless in so clear a case;
When with an air of state Orcano rose,
A peer descended from a princely race:
With warriors once he held respected place;
But, married to a young and beauteous bride,
His courage melted in her sweet embrace;
And in his babes now placing his chief pride,
Sad o'er the risks of war the sire and husband sighed.

XL.

"My Prince," he thus began, "I ne'er can blame
The warmth of words magnificent, that start
Bright with the impress of young Glory's flame,
Which will not be confined in the close heart;
And if the good Circassian, in the smart
Of ardent feeling, oft in speech exceeds
Cool caution's bounds and overplays his part,
This let him claim; for, hotly as he pleads,
His glorying words are matched by no less glorious deeds.

XLI.

"But it behoves thee, whom the wider ken
Of times and actions so discreet has made,
Such spirits by thy wisdom to restrain,
When by enthusiast heat too far betrayed;
To balance with thy hopes of distant aid
Our present perils—what may yet befal,—
And to contrast, in this their fierce crusade,
The arms, the zeal, the genius of the Gaul,
With each new builded work and immemorial wall.

XLII.

"Our town (if freely I may speak my thought)
Is strong by nature, stronger yet by art;
But what sublime and strong machines are brought
Against its bulwarks, on the adverse part!
What is to happen, I know not,—my heart
Both hopes and fears the issue, as the scale
Vibrates of war; but hope must soon depart,
Hope must depart, for sustenance will fail,
If they in stricter siege invest us, and assail.

XLIII.

"But, as respects the store of herds and grain
That yesternight within the walls was brought,
Whilst the prest Franks, in yon pavilioned plain
Crimsoning their swords, on conquest only thought,
(And at the greatest hazard it was wrought,)
What will it be in this large town? at most,
Scant for our need, if the siege lasts; nor short
The siege must prove, e'en though the Egyptian host
Come punctual to the day and hour at first proposed.

XLIV.

"But what, if longer they delay? or grant
That they our hopes outstrip, and well fulfil
Their plighted promise, is there nought to daunt?
Is the war-storm rolled back from Zion hill?
Is victory ours?—No, King! we must fight still
With this redoubted Godfrey, as at first;
With the same captains, the same hosts, whose skill
So oft has baffled the fair hopes we nursed,
And Arabs, Persians, Turks, in utter rout dispersed!

XLV.

"Their bravery, brave Argantes! thou hast known,
Who oft in field hast yielded quick retreat,
Oft to the conquering foe thy shoulders shown,
Oft turned for safety to thy wind-swift feet:
Coupled with thee in danger and defeat,
This knows Clorinda, this know I; not one
In the divan has cause for self-conceit
Above the rest; my lord, I censure none;
All that the might of man can do, ourselves have done.

XLVI.

"Yet will I say, though he should frown to hear
The truth, and fiercely take the dues of hate,
I see, alas, by tokens but too clear,
The dreaded Franks led onward by a fate
Not to be shunned! no force, however great,
Nor harnessries of steel, nor towers of stone
Will bar their final conquest; this I state,
(Bear witness, righteous Heaven!) from zeal alone,—
Zeal for my country's good, and duty to the throne.

XLVII.

"How wise the King of Tripoli! he knew
How with calm peace his kingdom to retain;
Whilst by his stubbornness the Soldan drew
Their vengeance down, and either now lies slain,
Or vilely groans beneath the victor's chain;
Or into exile, of each face afraid,
Flies, eking out a life of care and pain;
He too, had he but yielded part, and paid
Tribute or gifts of price, might still his realms have swayed."

XLVIII.

In these ambiguous words the Syrian gave
A dubious glimpse of his oblique device;
For, to buy peace and live a feudal slave
He durst not openly the king advise:
But the impetuous Solyman of Nice,
With deepest scorn and indignation stung,
No longer could endure such calumnies;
And first the Wizard whispered him, "How long
Art thou disposed to bear the taunts of such a tongue?"

XLIX.

"Against my will," he answered, "well you wist,
Keep I thus mute; I burn with rage and scorn!"
Scarce had he said, than the gross web of mist
That like a garment mantled them, was torn,
And into open heaven dissolving borne;
At once refulgent from the rending cloud
The Prince stood forth in the clear light of morn;
With fiery eye, magnificent and proud,—
Into the hall he strode and sudden spake aloud:

L.

"Lo, I of whom ye prate, before you stand,
No timorous wretch that into exile flies,
But ready e'en with this war-wearied hand,
To prove how foully yon pale craven lies!
And is it I, who shed—in all men's eyes,
Such streams of blood; who fought, the livelong night,
Till the smooth plain did into mountains rise,—
I, who with thousands still sustained the fight,
Of every friend deprived—am I accused of flight?

LI.

"But mark me well! if he, or any such,
False to his faith, his country, and his kind,
Dares on so base a theme again to touch,
This sword shall stab the mischief in his mind:
First lambs and wolves shall in one fold be joined;
First doves and snakes shall in one nest embrace;
Ere on one soil affianced peace shall bind
Our hands in friendship with this hated race;
No! first the stable globe shall perish from its place."

LII.

Whilst speaking, he his terrible right hand
Laid on his sword in threatful attitude;
As statues mute, the Magnates of the land
Sate, by his words and Gorgon face subdued:
Then with a gentler tone, in milder mood,
He greeted courteously the King, and said;
"No more, my lord, on past reverses brood,
Since I am here, who bring no trivial aid;
Let this to livelier hopes thy fainting heart persuade."

LIII.

He, rising to salute him, made reply;
"Oh with what joy do I behold thee here!
Now, neither of my slaughtered chivalry
Feel I the loss, nor for the future fear;
Thou of a truth art come, companion dear!
My power to fix, and in good time renew—
Unless the flattering stars prove insincere—
Thine own;" thus saying, to the Prince he drew,
And round his neck his arms in strict embracement threw.

LIV.

Their greetings paid, his own rich chair of state
The King conceded to the brave Nicene;
Then on a damask throne beside him sate,
And on his left hand placed the sage Ismene:
Whilst of their wondrous coming unforeseen
Curious the King for explanation pressed
The Archimage apart, Clorinda sheen
Came from her seat, and to the royal guest
Respectful homage paid; him honouring, rose the rest:

LV.

And with them brave Ormusses, who, endued
Of late by Solyman with powers to guide
A troop of Arabs to the town, pursued
Ways long disused, and whilst the fight was plied
With sternest resolution, undescried
Through the dark midnight, had the skill to gain
The straitened town in safety; and beside
His armed force, brought store of herds and grain;
Aids, which the pining host had looked for long in vain.

LVI.

Sole with an aspect full of surly scorn,
Silent the piqued Circassian kept his place;
Like a grim lion, that at sound of horn
Rolling his eyes, disdains to stir one pace:
Abashed Orcano durst not e'en upraise
His eyes; but, pricked by Shame's compunctuous sting,
Shrunk from his wronged opponent's angry gaze:
The Soldan thus and nobles in a ring
Leave we in deep divan, around the Syrian King.

LVII.

But Godfrey, following fast as victory led,
Had cleared the ambushed straits, the guarded heights,
And paid meanwhile to his lamented dead
The last funereal pomps and pious rites:
And now he gives command that all his knights
Be ready, when the matin trumpet calls,
To move the' assault; their ardour he incites;
And wheeling round, in prospect of the walls,
Yet mightier rams and towers, the townsmen more appals.

LVIII.

And when he knew the noble troop that came
In the last fight so timely to his aid
For his own knights, who, through their amorous flame,
Had followed late the fair insidious maid,—
And with them Tancred, whom we saw betrayed
To powerless bondage in Armida's cage,
After his fancied Lady as he strayed,—
Alone before the Solitary Sage
And his chief friends, he sent, their presence to engage.

LIX.

Soon as they came, "Let one of you," he said,
"Of your brief wanderings the events relate:
And by what turn of fortune you were led
To bring such succour in so sharp a strait:"
They blushed; since, e'en for venial errors, great
Is the remorse of virtue; each would shun
The task, and downcast stood with looks sedate:
Raising his eyes at length, the' illustrious son
Of British William rose, and bashful thus begun.

LX.

"We, whose void lots remained undrawn, whilst night
Favoured us, secretly from camp withdrew;
Following, I not deny, Love's meteor light,
And a fair face insidious to undo;
We went by crooked byways, trod by few,
In discord, jealousy, and fierce debate;
And oft the witch impassioned glances threw,
Sweet words, and sweeter smiles, (seen through too late!)
Which, whilst they fed our love, increased our mutual hate.

LXI.

"At length we reached the' accursed spot, where Heaven
Rained down its flaky fire in ancient time,
Revenging outraged Nature on the leaven
Of foul Gomorrah and her coasts of crime:
Once fruitful was the land, and pure the clime;
Where odious winds now fret, and billows yell,
Rolled on a wild lagoon of bubbling slime
Bituminous, that, smoking as they swell,
Breathe in gross air the hue and sulphurous scent of hell.

LXII.

"This is the pool in which whate'er is thrown
Will never sink, but on the surface float;
Men, iron, marble, brass, and solid stone,
All that has weight, is buoyed up as a boat:
A castle crowns the flood, and o'er its moat
A narrow bridge gives access to the pile,
Thither we went; within, sweet mysteries smote
Our senses,—Nature wore her brightest smile;
Gay shone the summer sea, and laughed the' enchanted isle.

LXIII.

"The air was mild, heaven calm, the joyous bowers
Fresh, the woods green, the waters bright and blue;
Midst myrtles, lilachs, and divinest flowers,
A fountain to the sun in silver flew;
The crisp leaves made soft music, as to woo
Tired eyes to slumber in the shaded grass;
Heard was the bee to hum, the dove to coo,
Nor mute was heavenly Philomel; I pass
The glorious structures wrought in marble, gold, and glass.

LXIV.

"On the smooth turf, near the melodious wave,
In brownest shade were ivory tables set;
With sculptured vases decked and viands brave
Of every clime and season,—all that yet
Art dressed, or taste purveyed, or rifling net
Snared from the leafy wood or billowy sound,
With every flavorous wine and rich sherbet;
A hundred charming nymphs, with roses crowned,
Skilful as Hebe, served, and sped the banquet round.

LXV.

"With radiant smiles and fond engaging speech
She brewed enchantments fatal to our fame;
Whilst at the feast, from Love's full goblet, each
Quaffed off a long forgetfulness to shame,
She, rising, said, 'I soon return;' she came,—
But with a face less tranquil than before;
Her cheek's rose-hues were deepened into flame;
A small enchanting wand her right hand bore,
Her left a book, whence she strange mysteries murmured o'er.

LXVI.

" Fast as she read, I felt a secret change
Invest at once volition, sense, and thought;
I longed the watery element to range,
Leaped from my seat, and flounced in amorous sport
Through the smooth wave—so wonderfully wrought
Her spell! my legs combined; my arms began
To' incorporate; my tall form grew spare and short;
O'er all my skin bright scales of silver ran;
And the mute fish possessed the late majestic man.

LXVII.

" Changed like myself in form and instincts, all
Swam the clear silver of the living stream;
What then my feelings were, I now recal
As through the medium of a brainsick dream:
At length it pleased the' Enchantress to redeem
Our spirits from the spell; our shapes we took,
But wonder kept us dumb, and awe supreme;
When, still some anger lowering in her look,
She, threatening thus, our hearts with fresh commotion shook.

LXVIII.

" 'Lo, now at length ye know my height of power,
My empire o'er you! in my will it lies
To shut you up for ever in yon tower,
Dead to the sunshine of the cheerful skies;
Or rib you into rocks of stone or ice
To bear the fury of all winds that blow;
To wing you into birds; or, in a trice,
Root you in earth to germinate and grow;
In shaggy hides to howl, or in cold fountains flow.

LXIX.

" 'You yet may shun my anger, if you choose
To' adapt your conduct to my sovereign will;
Change but your faith, and in our service use
Your swords the impious Lorrainer to kill:'
All scorned the curst conditions to fulfil,
Save base Rambaldo; him, and him alone
She won,—whilst we (for 'gainst her magic skill
What could avail?) in darksome cells were thrown,
Beneath a weight of chains, for long, long moons to groan.

LXX.

"To the same castle came in evil hour
Bold Tancred, who by guile was captured too:
But the fair false Enchantress in her tower
Not long detained us; for, if fame say true,
An envoy with an armed retinue
Came with Prince Idraotes' signet ring
From rich Damascus,—of the maid to sue,
That he our troop, disarmed and chained, might bring
As an obliging gift before the' Egyptian king.

LXXI.

"Watched by a hundred guards we went our way;
When, as the providence of Heaven decreed,
The good Rinaldo, who from day to day
Goes adding by some new heroic deed
Fresh grace to glory, on his sprightly steed
Met us, nor paused a moment to assail
The knights our guard;—most nobly did he speed;
Victorious from the foe our shirts of mail
Stript, and to us restored, attest the certain tale.

LXXII.

"I saw, all saw him! to his robes we clung,
Heard his kind voice, and grasped his hand; thus then,
False is the rumour that from tongue to tongue
Sounds through the Camp, which misreports him slain:
The youth is safe; but thrice the sun's bright wain
Has circled heaven, since, with a pilgrim guide
Parting from us, he took the sandy plain
That leads to Antioch; having first aside
His shattered armour cast, to deepest crimson dyed."

LXXIII.

He ceased; meanwhile his eyes the Hermit raised
To heaven,—his colour changed, diviner grew
His sainted form; quick feelings feelings chased,
And all his features into sunshine threw:
Full of the Deity, his spirit flew
On rapture's glowing wings, in glorified
Trance to the sanhedrim of Angels,—drew
The curtains of the sanctuary aside,
And the eternal march of unborn years descried.

LXXIV.

Unlocking then in more than mortal sound
His lips, of things to come the Prophet tells;
The rest in wonder at the change stand round,
Attentive to his thundered oracles:
"He lives," he cried, "Rinaldo! and all else
Are but the wiles of feminine deceit;
He lives; and God, the living God that dwells
In splendours beaming round the Mercy-seat,
Reserves his unripe youth for glories more complete.

LXXV.

"Trivial as yet and infantile appears
Each feat of his wherewith awed Asia rings;
I see, I see him with the rushing years
Tame the strong crimes of Cæsars and of kings;
And with the mild shade of its silver wings,
I see his brooding Eagle overspread
The Eternal City and the Church, that springs
From the wolf's paw redeemed as from the dead,
And many a worthy son shall bless his happy bed;—

LXXVI.

"Children, and children's sons, who shall be styled
Illustrious patterns of their sires' renown;
And guard from wicked courts and traitors vilde
The Papal mitre and the ducal crown,
With the religious temples; to strike down
The haughty, raise the weak, the guilty goad,
And shield young merit from misfortune's frown—
These be their arts; and in this glorious mode
Shall Este's Eagle soar beyond the Solar road.

LXXVII.

"And just it is, that, as by power unawed
She strikes for truth, rejoicing in the light,
From Peter's hands her pounce shall bear abroad
The mortal thunders; wheresoe'er the fight
Waxes for Christ, her baffling pinions bright
With triumph aye shall spread; this brilliant track
Heaven and her inborn virtue to her flight
Accord;—thus, home to the sublime attack
Whence she hath flown, 'tis willed the trumpets call her back!"

LXXVIII.

The griefs and fears that each had entertained,
Wise Peter's words did wholly dissipate;
Sole in the general joy the Duke remained
Silent, given up to themes of gravest weight:
Meanwhile the sun had reached Eve's golden gate;
Still Night o'er earth her solemn mantle throws;
Home to their several tents the Chiefs of state
Return, and give their members to repose;
But Godfrey's studious mind no rest in slumber knows.

CANTO XI.

Stanza lxxxi.

ARGUMENT.

With holy hymns, pure sacrifice, and prayer,
The Christian hosts invoke celestial aid;
Then storm the town, and to their rage lay bare
The yawning walls—some tempt the escalade;
The breach is widened, when the Persian maid
Shoots at the Captain from her mural height;
With the sore wound his high success is stayed;
Cured by an Angel, he renews the fight,
But the sun soon rolls down, and Mars gives place to Night.

I.

WHILST thus the Captain of the Christian nations,
Whose constant thoughts on the assault were bent,
Prepared, to shake to their most deep foundations
The city walls, each warlike instrument—
Forth came the Hermit from his morning tent;
And, taking him aside with solemn air,
In these grave words arrested his intent:
"Arms of this world, O Chief, dost thou prepare?
Know, 'tis celestial aid that first should claim thy care!

II.

"Begin from Heaven; invoke with holy hymn,
With public prayer and reverential deed,
The armed hosts of Saints and Seraphim,
By whose blest aid success may be decreed;
In sacred garments let the Priests precede,
And tuneful psalms with suppliant voices raise;
Whilst thou and thy illustrious Nobles lead
The multitude along, that, as they gaze,
Shall catch from you the flame of piety and praise."

III.

Severely spake the army's ghostly guide,
And virtuous Godfrey owned the words were wise;
"Servant approved of Jesus!" he replied,
"Well pleased I follow thy inspired advice;
Thus then, whilst I to these solemnities
My captains, lords, and chevaliers invite,
Seek thou the ministers of sacrifice,
William and Ademar; with them unite,—
The sacred pomp prepare, and ceremonial rite."

IV.

The Seer, the bishops, and the monks next morn,
With all the canons of inferior class,
Meet in a valley far from camp withdrawn,
Where, round an altar on the hallowed grass,
The Priests were wont to solemnise high mass;
White robes they wear; the Pastors of the flocks
Have on their sacerdotal albs, which pass
In front divided o'er their golden frocks,
Clasped with aigraffes of pearl; starred mitres crown their locks.

V.

Peter alone, before, spread to the wind
The sacred sign which Seraphim revere;
The choir with slow and solemn steps behind
In two long ranks, apart, their voices rear
In heavenly hymns and anthems, that insphere
The spirit of sweet praise and humble prayer,
Sung in alternate chorus; last appear
William and Ademar,—the reverend pair
Bring up their arriere bands in order passing fair.

VI.

Great Bouillon next, without companion, passed,
As kings and princes use; by two and two
The Captains followed in his steps; and last,
The total host in distribution due,
Armed for defence: thus marshalled, they marched through
The portal-gates; all tumult far was flown;
Nor brazen horn ferocious clamours blew,
Nor war-cry shrilled: to heaven arose alone
Piety's suppliant voice in music's melting tone.

VII.

Thee, Father! thee they sing, coequal Son!
And thee, blest Spirit! in whom both combine;
All-pitying, saving, all-consoling One!
Thee, Virgin-Mother of the man divine!
And ye, who o'er the bright-wing'd hosts that shine
Around, in triple orbs vicegerence have,
Princedoms! your succour they invoke; and thine,
Baptist beloved! that in the less pure wave,
Pure Mary's sacred Son immaculate didst lave

VIII.

Thee too they hail, the strong, the stable rock
Whereon the Church is built; whose gentle pleas
Win now thy new successor to unlock
The gracious gates of pardon and of peace;[8]
And the twelve heralds who o'er lands and seas
Adventuring, published with their latest breath
Their Lord's triumphant apotheosis;
And those who, seized, tormented for the Faith, [death.
Proved with their blood its power, and sealed its truth with

[8] The poet in these verses pays a passing compliment to the Catholic liberality of Pope Gregory XIII., who, during the jubilee in the summer of 1575, granted a general indulgence to the Roman people.

IX.

To saints whose writings point the path to truth
And bliss, no less soft supplications swell;
To Christ's dear handmaid, who in bloom of youth
The nobler part of life selected well;
To the chaste virgins that in cave or cell
With solemn nuptials were espoused to God;
And those who, braving kings and nations fell,
The lictor's axe, the prætor's torturing rod,
Strait Virtue's thorny path magnanimously trod.

X.

Thus worshipping, thus chanting in their zeal,
Circling the long, long plain, the people came
With easy pace to Olivet, a hill
Fruitful in olives, whence it takes its name;
A hill long signalised by sacred fame
Through the wide world; like a majestic queen
East of the town it soars, as if to claim
The' ascendant, parted only by the green
Vale of Jehoshaphat, which fills the space between.

XI.

Thither the tuneful army tends, and fills
The heaven with melody; the vales ring round,
And answering Echo from her haunted hills,
From secret caves and hollow glens profound,
A thousand times repeats the charming sound;
You would have thought a choir of Dryads near,
Sang from the groves and grottos underground;
So variously, and aye so sweet and clear,
Jesu, Maria's name rewarbled back they hear.

XII.

On the town walls the curious Pagans stand,
Silent as summer night; in much amaze
At rites so strange, unwonted pomps so grand,
Their solemn march, and humble hymns of praise;
Long on the sacred spectacle they gaze;
But when the novelty of show is o'er,
A scornful yell the wicked miscreants raise,
That with loud blasphemies the mountains hoar,
Woods, torrents, towers, the rocks, and winding valleys roar.

XIII.

But not for this their pure, melodious song
The Christians cease; the clamours of their foes
Unmoved they slight, as they would slight a throng
Of chattering swallows or loquacious crows;
Nor can the arrows which their strong cross-bows
Loose, at such distance, from the dancing string,
Their orderly array to discompose,
Strike them with fear, or mar the notes they sing;
Full to their purposed close the hymns commenced they bring.

XIV.

Next, for communion, on the mountain's height
The sacramental altar beautified
With sculptured images they raise, and light
The golden lamps that stand on either side;
Then other vestments, more divinely dyed,
With gold engrained, the pontiff William wears;
And, after silent thought, to God their guide
Lowly he bends, and asks, in fervent prayers,
Peace for sins past, and grace against impending snares.

XV.

Whilst humbly round, the near spectators bend,
The more remote attend with stedfast eyes
His speaking lips; when now there was an end
Of the pure rites and mystic sacrifice,
The Bishop turned, and lifting toward the skies
His sacerdotal hands, the armies blessed;
Then cried to them, "Depart!" the companies,
With silent pomp slow wheeling to the west,
By the same path returned which they before had pressed.

XVI.

The' entrenchments entered, people, duke, and prince,
Filled with sweet peace to their pavilions went;
Whilst thousands, proud their homage to evince,
Escorted Godfrey as with one consent
E'en to the threshold of his curtained tent,
Parting with fond farewells: but he recalled
The captains, and, as midnoon now was spent,
To a plain feast the party seneschalled,
And in the second seat the Count Toulouse installed.

XVII.

When they with drinks and viands had appeased
Nature's keen appetites, the General rose,
And thus his knights addressed: "When next the east
Shows morning, all things for the' assault dispose;
'Twill be a day of bloodshed and of blows,
Havoc, and sweat, and toil, as this is one
Of preparation, quiet, and repose;
Go then, prepare yourselves and troops; that done,
Rest all,—the dial's shade has yet some hours to run."

XVIII.

This said, they take their leave; the heralds then
By blast of trumpet give commands, that all
Stand ready under arms when first they ken
The breaking day, to storm the Northern wall:
Brisk was the tending of the steeds in stall,
Hammering of armour, trimming of the crest,
And deep the hum of wassail, till the call
To vespers, and still Night, the friend of rest,
Giving new truce to toil, all eyes in slumber blessed.

XIX.

Dubious and dusk, the Lady of the dawn
Not yet had risen to walk her rosy round;
The shepherd sought not yet his customed lawn;
Nor shining share turned up the fallow ground;
Still in their nests the blithe birds slumbered sound;
Not yet the lark upsoared on flickering wing,
Nor forest echoed to the horn or hound;
When first the matin trump was heard to sing,
"To arms!"—"to arms!" the skies, and misty valleys ring.

XX.

Ten thousand tongues take up the welcome words,
"To arms!" and still "to arms!" is all their cry;
Godfrey awakes, but not this morning girds
The wonted cuishes on his martial thigh;
His greaves and iron mail are hung on high,
And on his back is borne a suppler suit,
Of lighter make, and less validity,—
Arms, only worn by such as fight on foot;
When in good Raymond comes, to pay the morn's salute.

XXI.

The Count, perceiving him armed thus, soon guessed
His purpose, and exclaimed; "How's this, my lord?
Where is your solid breastplate? where the rest
Of your steel armours, hard and strong to ward
Strokes, that may else prove fatal! what! abroad
But half arrayed, in a juppón so weak?
This negligence we never can applaud;
It would appear, our Chief was bent to seek
Mean glory's course; of such these habits seem to speak.

XXII.

"What! look you for the private palm of those
That mount the breach? to others leave the task,
And some less serviceable souls expose
To risks adapted to the meed they ask;
Resume, my lord, your customary casque,
Vant-brace, and hauberk; know your proper post:
For ours, if not for your protection, mask
Your face; for Heaven's sake, go not thus exposed!
You are the soul, the strength, the life-blood of the host."

XXIII.

"When," said the Chief, "pope Urban girt this blade
On me in Clermont, and the holy Seer
Bade me perform in this divine crusade
The duties of a gallant chevalier,
I made a secret vow to God, that here
I would not act on this eventful day,
Come when it might, as Captain or as Peer;
But thus assume the arms and plain array
Which simple soldiers use, and combat e'en as they.

XXIV.

"When, therefore, these my armies marshalled stand
In war-bravade against the town,—when I
Have fully seen to all points that demand
The Chief's considerate head and judging eye,
Reason it is, nor thou the need deny,
That, faithful to my vow, I strive to reap
A soldiers's laurels, to the walls draw nigh,
And, sword in hand, upon the ramparts leap;
Heaven will my ventured life in safe protection keep."

XXV.

He ceased; and the Frank knights with loud acclaim
The' example took; his brothers, and the rest
Of the confederate barons did the same,
And in light mail their limbs as footmen drest:
Meantime the Pagans to the quarter pressed
That fronts Arctóphylax, the icy Bear,
And thence wheels round towards the golden west:
For more accessible the site, and there
Less stubborn shew the walls, impregnable elsewhere.

XXVI.

Elsewhere, the crag-built town would scorn the war
Of hosting millions; thither not alone
Does the fierce tyrant the strong burghers draw,
The hireling aids, and satraps of his throne,
But them o'er whom advancing Age has strown
Its chill snows—bearded sires and boys he calls
To dangers and fatigues till now unknown;
These hie and serve the warriors on the walls
With stones, bitumen, lime, oil, darts, and brimstone balls.

XXVII.

With bristling arms and many a fixed machine,
Lined are the walls that overlook the plain;
Breast-high above them is the Soldan seen,
Like a grim Giant; whilst, with fell disdain
For ever working in his fretful brain,
Elsewhere, far-off discerned, Argantes rears
His bulk enormous; and, betwixt the twain,
High on the topmost tower, Clorinda fierce,
Known by her silver arms, conspicuously appears.

XXVIII.

Her costly quiver, with sharp arrows stored,
Hangs at her back,—the bow is in her hands,
Bent,—the shaft dances on the chord, the chord
Is ready drawn, and oft her eye demands
The instant coming of the Christian bands:
Burning to twang the string against the crowd,
With lips apart the Lady archer stands
As Dian stood, when from the radiant cloud
She loosed her vengeful darts at Niobe the proud.

XXIX.

Below, on foot, the aged Monarch hies
From gate to gate, upon the walls surveys
His first arrangements with observant eyes,
And cheers his troops with speeches full of praise;
Here he recruits their ranks, and there displays
Store of fresh arms and engines, and with care
Provides for all; but, in the public ways,
Throngs of sad matrons to the mosques repair,
And to their Prophet false bend low in senseless prayer.

XXX.

"O Mahmoud! with thy strong and righteous hand
In twain the spear of this Frank spoiler break!
Check, and confound, and stretch him on the sand
Beneath our walls, for thine own glory's sake,
Which he so much has outraged!" thus they spake;
But their words reached not him, who, pierced with pains
Eternal, tosses on the fiery lake:—
Whilst for defence each nerve the City strains,
Musters the Christian Chief his army on the plains.

XXXI.

And first from camp his infantry he guides,
With wondrous providence and art disposed,
And 'gainst the walls to ruin doomed, divides
Transversely into two the massy host:
In centre the wheeled engines take their post,—
Structures of unimaginable powers,—
Scorpions and strong ballistæ; whence are tost,
Like lightning and like thunder on the towers,
Lances, and quarried rocks, and sleet of arrowy showers.

XXXII.

His heavier-armed he places in the rear
For surer guard, his light horse in the wings;
Then gives the word, and instant in the ear
Of either host the signal-trumpet rings:
Tremendous is the cast of stones from slings,
Javelins from engines, quarrels from cross-bows,
And mortal arrows from resounding strings;
Some fall, some flee; and thinned and broken shows,
On the defended wall, the phalanx late so close.

XXXIII.

Then with all speed the eager Franks impel
Their progress; part into a tortoise form,
Shield locked with shield, beneath its iron shell
Secure; whilst part slink from the sounding storm
Of stones and raining darts, in cubiform
Battalia underneath the vines; they gain,
Thus screened, the counterscarp, and ceaseless swarm,
Fervent as summer-emmets, nor in vain,
The hollow depth to fill and equal with the plain.

XXXIV.

The circling moat was not of marshy sward,
(This the dry soil forbade,) nor soft with mud;
So that they filled it soon, though large and broad,
With turf, stones, timber, and fascines of wood:
Daring Adrastus was the first that stood
From forth the shell of shields; he raised sublime
A scaling-ladder, and, despite the flood
Poured from above, of boiling pitch and lime,
Dauntless his crest advanced, and stood resolved to climb.

XXXV.

The fiery Switzer in his rash neglect
Of life, on high with wonder they survey,
Mark to a thousand arrows, and unchecked
By all that would his course audacious stay;
Half had he finished his aërial way,
When sudden, by the strong Circassian thrown,
A huge round rock with quick tempestuous sway,
As from a mortar shot, upon his crown
Alit, and rudely beat the' heroic soldier down.

XXXVI.

Not mortal is the stroke; but still the fall
Stuns him, and mute and motionless he lies;
Loud shouted then the victor on the wall,—
"Fallen is the first! who next the venture tries?
Why not assail us in the open skies?
Come from your caves; skulk not like foxes there,—
I skulk not; nothing shall your strange device
Save you, but like the badger and the bear
Die in your dens ye shall; by Mahomet I swear!"

XXXVII.

Not for his taunt the Franks their toil refrain;
But, close in curtain of their sheds concealed,
Safe the barbed darts and heavy weights sustain,
Man linked with man, and shield compact with shield;
Whilst to the basis of the walls are wheeled
Batteries, of beams immeasurable, with plates
Of hammered iron thrice with fire annealed,
Fronted like rams; at whose assailing threats
Tremble the lofty walls, and shake the echoing gates.

XXXVIII.

Meanwhile a hundred hands upon the walls
Have heaved, and hung in terrible libration
O'er the blind tortoise a huge crag; as falls
The loosed lavange from its aërial station,
Down, down it rolled,—in thundering dislocation
Crushed the dense shell of shields, crushed helm and head,
And left the battered ground, in agitation
From the o'erwhelming mountain, overspread
With blood, with brains, with bones, and arms of sanguine red.

XXXIX.

No longer now beneath the sheltering roof
Of their machines the Franks themselves confine,
But from the latent risks to open proof
Of danger rush, and give their light to shine;
Some raise scalados, nor to mount decline,
Though in the face of peril and mishap;
Others the deep foundations undermine;
Then rock the walls, and many a glorious gap
Starts in the shrinking base and buttresses they sap.

XL.

And fallen they had, so fast its boisterous blows
Thereon the huge bombarding ram repeats,
But from the battlements the Turks oppose
The wonted artifice that most defeats
Its horned might; where'er the vast beam beats,
Packs of soft wool elastic they suspend;
With which, when as the butting engine meets,
The substance yields, the pliant swathes distend,
Break the rude shock, and safe the' endangered wall defend.

XLI.

Whilst in this valiant mode the daring bands
Round the climbed walls in clusters fight and bleed,
Seven times Clorinda bends, seven times her hands
Twang the tough bow, and loose the eager reed;
As many shafts as from the ivory speed,
So many stain their points and grey-goose wings.
Not in plebeian blood—so mean a deed
Her spirit had disdained,—but that which springs
In the more noble veins of heroes, chiefs, and kings.

XLII.

The first brave knight that by her arrow bled,
Was the young heir of Britain's happy land;
Scarce from the tortoise had he raised his head,—
The shaft came down and pierced his better hand;
His glove of steel availed not to withstand
The deadly weapon,—from the wounded vein
Gushed the bright blood, and purpled all the sand:
Disabled thus for fight he left the plain,
And, groaning, gnashed his teeth, but more from rage than pain.

XLIII.

The good Count Amboise on the fosse's bank,
And in the high scalade Clotharius died;
The former pierced from breast to back, the Frank
More dreadfully transfixed from side to side;
Again she shot; and as the Flemings' guide
Swung the huge ram, her arrow cut the wind,
And pierced his arm: to draw the dart he tried;
But ill the shaft obeyed his ardent mind,
The shaft indeed he drew, but left the head behind.

XLIV.

As too rash Ademar, the grave and good,
Watched the assault far-off, the fatal cane,
Charged with hot wrath, came whizzing where he stood,
And grazed his brow; impatient of the pain,
He clapped his hand upon the wounded vein,
When lo, a second nailed it to his head,
And quivering fixed in his bewildered brain!
He falls—his holy blood by woman shed,
Floats o'er his priestly robes, and dyes the sable red.

XLV.

As Palamed, the young, the bold, and brisk,
Climbed the tall steps, and on the steep tower's height
Just placed his foot, disdaining every risk,
To his right eye the seventh shaft took its flight:
Passed its orb'd cell, and through the nerves of sight
Issued, vermilion, at the nape; he fell,
Blind with the shadows of fast-hasting night,
And sighed out life beneath the citadel
Which he had hoped to win, and had assailed so well.

XLVI.

Thus shot the maid! the Duke meanwhile oppressed
In fresh assaults, beside the Northern gate,
The' embattled guard; and to the walls addressed
The most colossal of his engines great,—
A tower of cedar, built sublime to mate
The topmost walls, stupendous to behold!
Ponderous with ported arms, and fraught with fate,
With half a squadron in its spacious hold—
On thunderous wheels it moved, and near the turrets rolled.

XLVII.

Onward it came; far shooting, as it drove,
Lightnings of arrows at its facing foes;
And, as ships use with ships in sea-fights, strove
By instant grappling with the walls to close:
But this the Pagans at all points oppose;
Now pushing back the fabric, battering now
Its front and timbered sides with clubs, with crows,
And Moorish maces; with the rocks they throw,
Break the huge beams above, the heaving wheels below.

XLVIII.

Such was from this part, such from that the flight
Of stones and darts, that Titan seemed to shroud
His face, blue heaven shewed brown as summer-night,
And cloud, rebounding, clashed in air with cloud,
Like two thwart tides: as leaves from forests bowed
By showers congealed in winter's icy hall
To hail,—as apples shook by whirlwinds loud
In unripe greenness from the stalk, so fall—
In heaps the Moslem foe from the dismantled wall.

XLIX.

For 't was on them the shot most havoc made,
As less defenced and sheltered from its power:
Of the forlorn survivors, numbers fled,
In utter terror of the fulmined shower,
And thunder of the strong stupendous tower;
But still the Soldan stayed, and round him drew
A few bold spirits unalarmed, the flower
Of Syrian bravery; Argantes too,
Armed with a ponderous beam, against the fabric flew.

L.

Back with vast force, the length of all the pine,
He pushed, and kept it distant; to his side
Came from her tower the Lady palatine,
With them in glory and in risk allied;
Meanwhile the Christians with long scythes divide
From the wall's headlong perpendicular,
The ropes to which the pendent bales were tied;
Which, down descending, leave the ramparts bare
To all the rude affronts and thunderstrokes of war:

LI.

And thus the tower above and ram below
Play with such fury now, that they begin,
Crushed, cleft, and undermined, to yawn, and shew
The houses, mosques, and peopled streets within;
Thither the army swarms with lively din,
By Godfrey led beneath the battled marge;
Who, fully bent the tottering wall to win,
Moves under compass of that ampler targe,
Which never loads his arm, but on some desperate charge.

LII.

Thence he perceives Prince Solyman descend
Down to the gaping breach, and, sword in hand,
The' attempted pass at all risks to defend,
With fixed resolve, imperatively grand,
Amidst the ruins take his haughty stand;
Leaving on guard, with providence discreet,
Clorinda and Argantes, to command
The walls; he sees, and feels his bosom beat
With generous scorn of life, and glory's fervent heat:

LIII.

And to the good Sigiér, who bore behind
His bow and buckler, he directs his speech;
"Give me, my friend, that lighter shield refined,
Whose temper, axe nor sabre can impeach;
Quick! to yon ruined rocks I mean to reach;
And of these multitudes the first to be
That pass victorious through the guarded breach;
High time it is, that of my chivalry
Some such transcendent proof the host at length should see!"

LIV.

Scarce, changing shields, had he said this, than swift
A barbed arrow on sonorous wing,
Shot from the summit of the mural clift,
Transfixed his leg, where keenest was the sting,
The nervous region whence its sinews spring;
'T was thou, Clorinda, if report say true,
Sent the fell shaft, and 't is thy praise we sing;
From thrall, from death, if then thy Pagan crew
Escaped, to thee alone the laurel-leaves are due.

LV.

But the brave Chief, as though he did not feel
The deadly anguish of the hurt he bore,
Ceased not his course, but climbed with daring zeal
The breach, and down fresh rocky fragments tore,
Cheering his party on; but stiff and sore
The wound soon waxed; and the encumbering foot
His active labours can sustain no more;
Through all the limb keen shivering horrors shoot;
Forced, he at length gives o'er, and quits the wished pursuit.

LVI.

Beckoning Guelph therefore to his side, he said;
"Withdraw I must; sustain, my friend, I pray,
The Captain's place and person in my stead,
Supply mine absence in this sharp essay;
Short, at the worst, will be the time I stay,
I do but go and come,—my hurt bites keen,
Though but a bruise;" this said, without delay,
On a light steed he leaped, and o'er the green
Rode to the Camp, but not, as he supposed, unseen.

LVII.

With him good fortune from his host departs
In favour of the foe, whose hopes rise high;
Strength and fresh spirits lift their dancing hearts,
Knit the slack arm, and fire the languid eye;
But with the Franks all strength and ardour die;
Weak grow their onsets; they maintain their ground,
But short of blood their darted weapons fly;
The sword still strikes, but strikes without a wound:
And e'en the' appealing trumps more languishingly sound.

LVIII.

And now again the crowded ramparts shew
Those who in panic late were scattered thence;
The very women, with the genuine glow
Of patriot rage and martial confidence
Caught from Clorinda, rush to their defence;
With robes succinct, and loose locks they appear,
Ranged all along the spacious ramparts, whence
They toss the dart, nor shew the slightest fear
To' expose their beauteous breasts for fortresses so dear.

LIX.

But that which most dismayed the Franks, and most
Revived the guardians of the sacred town,
Was, that a rock, in sight of either host,
Came from afar, and struck Lord Guelpho down;
Amidst a thousand as he climbed, the stone
Fell where the sinews of the knee were knit,
And ground its shivering armour to the bone;
At the same moment, a like mass alit
On Raymond's morioned brows, and him too backward smit.

LX.

Eustace is next hurt sore, as from the bank
Of the broad fosse he purposes to spring;
Nor in this hour so adverse to the Frank,
Was there one weapon sent upon the wing,
From horn or hand, from catapult or sling,
That did not to their cost or tear apart
Spirit from flesh, or bruise, or keenly sting;
In this success, wild waxed Argantes' heart,
And thus he roared, in sounds that made both armies start:

LXI.

"This is not Antioch, nor is this the night
Friendly to Christian guile; look up! survey
The shining sun, troops wakeful, and the fight,
Of a far different nature and array:
Is then your ancient love of praise and prey
Quite gone? extinct each spark of former fire?
That ye with such admired address give way,
And, spent so soon, from the assault retire,
Oh foemen!—nay, not men, but maids in men's attire!"

LXII.

By such-like taunts the haughty Chevalier
To such excess of rage his temper wrought,
That the large city seemed too small a sphere
For his hot spirit and capacious thought:
Up, with a shout, his strong beech-spear he caught;
Down leaping from the ramparts, made more wide
The ruin of the breach; and, as he brought
His bulk beneath it, seeing at his side
The dauntless Soldan, thus magnanimously cried:

LXIII.

"Lo, Solyman, the place! and lo, the time,
That may at length decide our proud dispute!
What wait you for? what fear? now first let him
Leap forth, who most the laurel and the fruit
Of sovereignty desires!" with this salute,
Out at once rushed they through the broken wall,
Their daring deeds to their demands to suit;
That, headstrong rage provoked, and native gall,
This, rival honour much, and much the rival's call.

LXIV.

Sudden and unforeseen upon the Franks,
In desperate rivalship, with shouts they flew;
And from amidst their dissipated ranks
So many soldiers pierced, so many slew,
And bucklers split, and helmets cleft in two,
And ladders broke, and swinging rams cut down,
That it might seem a second rampart grew
On failure of the first, hill-high, to crown
The ruined heap, and fend afresh the' endangered town.

LXV.

The crowds that late were ardent to ascend
The walls, to danger urged by the desire
Of mural crowns, now scarce themselves defend,
Much less to climb the rifted breach aspire,
But from the fierce assault, dismayed, retire:
Their rams, their vines, their catapults they quit;
Which, left a prey to the revenging ire
Of the two Pagans, battered, crushed, and split,
Are for all future use soon rendered quite unfit.

LXVI.

Like rapt Demoniacs loose, the dreadful pair
Wide and more wide the field of battle scour;
Call to the citizens for fire, and bear
Two blazing pines against the cedarn tower:
Forth from the gates of their Tartarean bower,
So curst Megara with Alecto breaks,
To set the world in uproar, with the power
Of Dis possessed; so each fell Sister shakes
Abroad her sparkling brand and bacchanalian snakes.

LXVII.

But Tancred, who elsewhere, yet unrepelled,
Cheered on his troops forth issuing from the vines,
Soon as that bold achievement he beheld,
The double brandished flames, the burning pines,—
Broke short his speech, and to the Saracines
Rushed, to chastise their rage and stay their wrack;
And of his prowess gave such pregnant signs,
That they who late as conquerors pressed the' attack,
Forbore the chase, and fled themselves affrighted back.

LXVIII.

Fled the grim Soldan, fled the Mameluke;
With humbler crests the way they came they went;
Thus changed the war! meanwhile, the wounded Duke
Had reached with pain the threshold of his tent;
And now 'twixt Baldwin and Sigiér stood bent
On instant succour; crowds on crowds succeed,
Who fill the air with sighing and lament;
He, whilst endeavouring from the flesh with speed
To draw at once the steel, broke short the rooted reed.

LXIX.

Thus baffled, careless of the coming smart,
He bade them take at once the shortest way
For cure, to largely lance the wounded part,
And bare to sight the barbed weapon lay:
"Send me but back to war, ere closing day
Invalidate our arms, or cool our zeal!"
He said; and straight, forbidding all delay,
Propt on his lance, to the physician's steel
Stretched out the afflicted limb, firm resting on his heel.

LXX.

Gray Erotimus, born beside the Po,
Came to his aid; a sage, who knew the use
And secret virtues of all springs that flow—
Of all green herbs the hills and woods produce;
He too was smiled on by the partial Muse,
But valued sweet Castalia's warbling wave
Less than the mute fall of Pœonian dews;
His science wounded men from death could save,
And cancelled names in verse immortally engrave.

LXXI.

Supported stands the Chief, serene; he grieves
But to behold his friends lamenting round;
The ready leech tucked up his long loose sleeves,
And with a belt his flowing tunic bound;
With sovereign herbs attractive he the wound
Soothed, with kind hand soliciting the dart,
Which yet stirred not; when this the Ancient found,
With nipping pincers he performed his part;
Still the vexed steel adhered, and mocked his nicest art.

LXXII.

No way seems Fortune willing to assist
His purpose or his skill; and Godfrey shows
Signs of sharp agony,—a deathlike mist
Swims o'er his sight, and from his members flows
A dead cold sweat: but piteous of his throes,
His guardian Angel from Mount Ida flies
With gathered dittany; an herb that blows
With purple flowers, delightful to the eyes,
In whose young downy leaves divinest virtue lies.

LXXIII.

The secret powers of this celestial plant
Maternal Nature to the mountain goat
Suggests, when, wounded in its heathy haunt,
The shaft adheres within its shaggy coat;
This now, though from a region so remote,
The winged Angel in a moment bears;
And, so that none the heavenly succour note,
In the warm bath which next the sage prepares,
Distils the sprightly juice, nor other medicines spares.

LXXIV.

Dews from the Lydian well, ambrosial oils,
And odorous panacee therein he flings;
The Sage with this the thrilling wound embroils
And, thus fomented, the barb'd steel outsprings
With voluntary impulse,—pain's sharp stings
Cease, the blood stanches, the cleft parts combine,
And a fresh vigour each lax tendon strings:
"Lo!" cried the leech, "this is no cure of mine;
This is not art's effect, but done by hands divine.

LXXV.

"Some Angel, shooting from the stars unspied,
Has been thy surgeon; of his heavenly hand
I see the tokens; arm then, arm!" he cried,
"Why linger? back, the battle to command!"
His leg the Chieftain with a purple band
Wrapped round, and, ardent for the war, in haste
Seized his ash-spear immeasurably grand,
Again upon his arm his buckler braced,
And on his cheerful brows the glistening helmet laced.

LXXVI.

And from his tent toward the shaken town
Turned with a thousand knights, and left the camp;
Clouds of raised dust the sapphire skies embrown,
In heaven's bright temple fades the' immortal lamp;
Trembles the firm earth underneath their stamp;
And, far-off as the foes his coming spy,
Chill flows their blood; their zeal faint horrors damp,
And through their bones fear's shivering lightnings fly;—
Loud shouted Godfrey thrice, loud thundered thrice the sky.

LXXVII.

Well knew his men the tones, which in them breathe
Zeal for the strife, and sorrow for their fault;
Their faintness, fears, they to the winds bequeath,
And rush renewed, like lions to the' assault:
Prest home, the two ferocious Pagans vault
Into the mural breach; thence quick protend
Their poignant spears, their moony shields exalt,
And stubbornly the rifted pass defend
From Tancred's knights, that thick as buzzing bees ascend.

LXXVIII.

Hither came Godfrey, gloriously embossed
In arms, wrath flashing from his looks severe;
And the next moment at Argantes tossed
The Jove-like lightnings of his awful spear;
Never from town or tower did engineer
From the strong scorpion rock or javelin cast
With more consummate force or swift career,—
The knotty beam e'en thundered as it passed;
Up raised the knight his shield, to meet it nought aghast.

LXXIX.

The poignant ash his shield in sunder clove,
Nor could his coat of mail its flight restrain;
Through shield, belt, corslet, ruining it drove,
And in pure vermeil did its point engrain;
But the fierce knight, impregnable to pain,
From his pierced veins and shattered brigantine
Plucked the fixt steel; and, hurling it amain
At Godfrey, cried; "To thee I re-consign
The gift; look thou thereto; it is no toy of mine!"

LXXX.

Back on its mission of revenge, the spear
Through the known path careering flew, but now
Struck not the mark at which 't was aimed; the Peer,
Its flight foreseeing, bent his plum'd head low,
And fairly shunned the meditated blow:
Yet void it fell not! deep the weapon lies
In Sigiér's throat; he dies, but not in woe;
Since in the stead of his loved lord he dies,
Glad from its cherished shrine the faithful spirit flies.

LXXXI.

At the same instant, with a pointed rock,
The powerful Soldan smote the Norman lord;
Who staggering, reeling, dizzied with the shock,
E'en like a whirling top from the child's cord,
Spun round, and senseless sank upon the sward:
Godfrey no longer could his wrath command;
But, brandishing his unsheathed blade abroad,
Clambered high up the ruined heap, where stand
The two colossal knights, and braved them, hand to hand

LXXXII.

Then glorious deeds he did, and would have done,
For sharp and deadly were the strokes he gave;
But, curtained in red clouds the slumberous sun
Went down, and from her dark Cimmerian cave
Night came, pacific, o'er the world to wave
Her arbitrary sceptre, and allay
The rage of wretched mortals; Bouillon brave
Thus ceased from fight, and through the shadows gray
Led back his hosts to camp: so passed that bloody day.

LXXXIII.

But, ere the pious Chief forsook the field,
He saw the wounded borne in spacious car
Safe to the tents, nor to the foe would yield
In prey an atom of his works of war;
The tower that did with most of havoc mar
The marble walls, and scared with most affright,
Remained entire, though seamed with many a scar;
The dreadful storm and thunders of the fight,
Though they had bruised its frame, had left the timbers tight.

LXXXIV.

Scaped the dire perils of the strife, it leaves
For a safe spot the scene of enterprise;
But as a vessel crowding sail, that cleaves
The roaring sea and its vext waves defies,
Just as its wished-for port the captain spies
Clear through his optic tube, in sudden squall,
Strikes on hid rocks,—or as a steed, that plies
With sure-foot speed his journey safe through all
The rugged lanes, drops down, in sight of his sweet stall;

LXXXV.

So the tower struck, so stumbled! on the side
Which had sustained the' artillery of the foe,
Two wheels broke down whereon the piece should slide,
Already crazed by some tempestuous blow;
That the huge engine stayed its motion slow,
And overhead hung ruinous in air;
But they with beams support it from below,
Till the prompt architects with skilful care
Uprear the' enormous bulk, its breaches to repair.

LXXXVI.

Thus Godfrey bade, that the stupendous mass
Might be refitted, ere the morning smile;
Then with his soldiers occupied each pass,
And stationed guards around the spacious pile;
But with the shrill sound of the saw and file,
Commingling rumours of the Chief's designs
Are by the townsmen clearly heard; the while
A thousand lights around the structure shine,
Whereby the work they watch, the latent scheme divine.

CANTO XII.

Stanza lxix.

ARGUMENT.

FIRST from her faithful slave Clorinda learns
The secret story of her birth; then goes,
Masked, on a high adventure, and returns
Safe to the gates, successful o'er her foes;
But, chased by Tancred to the vales, they close
In mortal battle, and she falls; yet ere
She dies, the rite of baptism he bestows;
Sorely the Prince bewails his slaughtered fair;—
Argantes vows revenge, and soothes the crowd's despair.

I.

'T WAS night; nor yet had either wearied host
Found soft refreshment in the arms of sleep;
But here the Christians, wakeful at their post,
Guard o'er the workmen round the engine keep;
And there the Pagans their defences steep,
Trembling and nodding to their fall, repair;
And, to build up the breaches wide and deep
Of the dismantled walls, no labour spare;
And each their wounded tend, with like considerate care.

II.

At length the wounds are bandaged, and complete
Is every one of their nocturnal tasks;
The rest they leave; and, wooed to slumber sweet
By gentler quiet, and the gloom that masks
The world at noon of night, their cumbrous casques
They cast aside: not so the Warrior maid;
Hungering for fame, she still for action asks,—
Action, from which fatigues all else dissuade:
With her Argantes walked, and inly thus she said:

III.

"Deeds rare and wonderful indeed this day
Have the bold Soldan and divine Argaunt
Accomplished, by themselves to take their way,
Huge towers beat down, and hostile millions daunt;
Whilst I, (the utmost merit I can vaunt,)
Cooped in on high, with distant shafts but checked
Their eager escalade; my shafts, I grant,
Flew fair enough, some fatal, I suspect;
But is this then the whole we women can effect?

IV.

"Better it were in woods and wilds again
To stags and wolves my arrows to confine,
Than trifle thus, a damsel, in the train
Of knights, whose actions so superior shine;
Why not the cuirass and the sword resign?
Resume my woman's weeds, and live dissolved
In careless ease?" thus mused she; but in fine
A daring project in her breast revolved,—
Turned to the knight, and thus broke forth with soul resolved:

V.

"I know not what blest ardour sets ablaze
My restless mind,—or do the Gods inspire
The daring thought that on my spirit preys,
Or make we Gods of each sublime desire?
Far lie the Franks encamped: look forth! admire
The twinkling lights that burn towards the west;
There will I go with torch and sword, and fire
Their rolling fort; this passion of my breast
Let me but see fulfilled, and Heaven arrange the rest!

VI.

"But if I chance to be by Fate debarred
From measuring back my steps, to thee, my friend,
The man that loves me with a sire's regard,
And my devoted damsels I commend:
Each kind protection to their griefs extend,
And back to Egypt, with the dear old sage,
The' inconsolable girls in safety send;
Promise me this! their sex and his great age
May well thy care demand, thy sympathies engage."

VII.

Argantes stood amazed; touched in his breast
Were all the springs of glory, and he cried;
"Wilt thou do this? and leave thy friend, disgraced,
Here with the' inglorious vulgar to abide?
Safe from the risk shall I with joy or pride
See the fire kindle? no, Clorinda, no!
If I have ever been in arms allied
With thee, with thee this night too will I go,
And all thy fortunes share, betide me weal or woe!

VIII.

"I have a heart too can scorn death, and feel
The bauble life well flung for fame away:"
"To this," she answered, "an eternal seal
Didst thou in thy brave sally set to-day;
But I am a mere woman in the way;
Feeble indeed are my poor powers, and small
The aid I lend; my death would none dismay;
But (Heaven avert the omen!) shouldst thou fall,
Who will remain behind to guard the sacred wall?"

IX.

"Why these excuses vain?" the knight replied;
"Fixed is my will, and settled mine intent;
Allowed, I follow; but, if once denied,
I go before thee, and thy zeal prevent:"
Thus overpowered, Clorinda gave consent,—
They seek the King, with emir, prince, and peer
Engaged in high and serious argument;
Then thus the Virgin spoke; "Oh Sire, give ear,
And what we wish to say with kind acceptance hear!

X.

"Argantes swears (nor vain will be the boast)
To fire yon rolling fort—the same swear I;
We wait alone till on the guardian host
Deep sleep falls heavy; those who wake shall die!"
The hoary King held up his hands on high;
A tear of joy streamed down his withered cheek;
"And praised," he said, "be Thou, who yet dost eye
With gracious care thy worshippers, and seek
Still to preserve my crown, and guard these kingdoms weak!

XI.

"Fall they shall not, whilst in their sure defence
Two such undaunted demigods are found;
To your deserts what equal recompense
Can I decree? Oh, evermore renowned!
Let Fame her golden trumpet take, and sound
Your glory, tuned to music's loftiest pitch,
And fill the' enchanted Universe around!
The deed itself be your reward; to which
No trifling part I add of realms esteemed as rich!"

XII.

He said, and fondly to his bosom strained
Now him, now her; to equal transport charmed,
The Soldan stood, nor in his heart contained
The generous envy that his spirit warmed:
But cried; "And not for nothing am I armed
With this good sword, nor shall I be less slow
To toss the fires!" the Amazon, alarmed
For her endangered fame, replied, "Not so:
Are all to make the' attempt? who stays, if thou shouldst go?"

XIII.

Argantes too, with features full of pride,
Stood ready to reject his scorned request;
But this the King forestalled, and first replied
With placid aspect to his regal guest;
"Forward thou ever art to manifest
Thyself emphatically great, a knight
Prompt to dispute the laurel with the best,
Consistent with thyself, untired in fight,
Whom no new shape of death or danger can affright!

XIV.

"I know that, sallying forth, thou deeds wouldst do
Worthy the Soldan; but for all to quit
Your wonted stations in the town, of you,
My bravest heroes, were a thing unfit,
Fraught with alarm; I would not e'en permit
These to depart, with such a jealous care
Guard I their lives, if I could well commit
To other hands the enterprise they dare—
Or if the deed itself of less importance were.

XV.

"But since around the' immeasurable tower
The guards so thick are stationed, that a few
Would not suffice, and numbers at this hour
Could not conveniently be spared on new
Fatiguing services, e'en let the two
That, to such risks accustomed, first proposed
The noble task, with prospering stars pursue
Their schemes alone, and realise a boast
Made in no idle mood: they are themselves a host.

XVI.

"Do thou, as best becomes a king, remain
As regent of the gates; and when the pair,
Of whose success sure hopes I entertain,
Have fired the pile and back their footsteps bear,
Prest by the Christians, with thy Turks repair,
Beat off the fierce pursuers, and prevent
The harms which else revenging rage may dare:"
Thus spoke the King; the Soldan, ill content,
Said not another word, but smiled a sour assent.

XVII.

"Yet go not," said Ismeno, "till I mix,
Of various grain impregnated with fiery spume,
Tartareous balls, that where they strike shall fix,
Fixing ignite, and blazing, soon consume
The tower to dust: the witching hour of gloom
Draws nigh; by then the soldiers may remit
Their watch, o'erpowered by languor, and the fume
Of sleep;" all praise the sorcerer's pregnant wit,
And parting wait the hour by him determined fit.

XVIII.

Her sculptured helm, her greaves of silver plate,
And burnished mail aside Clorinda laid;
And in a suit prophetic of her fate,
Sable, and rough with rust, her limbs arrayed,
Where no bright jewel flashed, nor plumage played:
For thus she thought unseen to leave beguiled
The watch, swift stealing through the friendly shade;
'T was then her eunuch came, Arsetes mild,
Who had her cradle rocked, and nursed her from a child.

XIX.

All careless of fatigue, the good old man
Tended her still; and, chancing now to see
The surreptitious arms, he soon began
To comprehend her risk; and on his knee,
Sore weeping, by the pious memory
Of his past offices, by locks grown grey
In her dear service, and by every plea
Of love and pity, did he long time pray
Her to resign the' attempt, and still she answered nay.

XX.

At length he said; "Since in its wrong thy mind
Is obstinate, since to my feeble years,
Since to my silver tresses thou art blind,
Blind to my love, and proof to all my tears,
My piteous prayers, and too prophetic fears,—
Lo, from thy hitherto unknown descent
I rend the veil! that known, do what appears
Good in thy sight:"—amazed, Clorinda bent
On him her large dark eyes, and thus the story went.

XXI.

"In former days o'er Ethiopia reigned,
Happy perchance reigns still, Senapo brave;
Who with his dusky people still maintained
The laws which Jesus to the nations gave:
'T was in his court, a Pagan and a slave,
I lived, o'er thousand maids advanced to guard,
And wait with authorised assumption grave,
On her whose beauteous brows the crown instarred;
True, she was brown, but nought the brown her beauty marred.

XXII.

"The King adored her, but his jealousies
Equalled the fervours of his love; the smart
At length of sharp suspicion by degrees
Gained such ascendance in his troubled heart,
That from all men in closest bower apart
He mewed her, where e'en Heaven's chaste eyes, the bright
Stars, were but half allowed their looks to dart;
Whilst she, meek, wise, and pure as virgin light,
Made her unkind lord's will her rule and chief delight.

XXIII.

"Hung was her room with storied imageries
Of martyrs and of saints; a Virgin here,
On whose fair cheeks the rose's sweetest dyes
Glowed, was depicted in distress; and near,
A monstrous dragon, which with poignant spear
An errant knight transfixing, prostrate laid:
The gentle Lady oft with many a tear
Before this painting meek confession made
Of secret faults, and mourned, and Heaven's forgiveness prayed.

XXIV.

"Pregnant meanwhile, she bore (and thou wert she)
A daughter white as snow; the' unusual hue,
With wonder, fear, and strange perplexity
Disturbed her, as though something monstrous too:
But, as by sad experience, well she knew
His jealous temper and suspicious haste,
She cast to hide thee from thy father's view;
For in his mind (perversion most misplaced!)
Thy snowy chasteness else had argued her unchaste.

XXV.

"And in thy cradle to his sight exposed
A negro's new-born infant for her own;
And as the tower wherein she lived enclosed
Was kept by me and by her maids alone,—
To me whose firm fidelity was known,
Who loved and served her with a soul sincere,
She gave thee, beauteous as a rose unblown,
Yet unbaptised; for there, it would appear,
Baptised thou couldst not be in that thy natal year.

XXVI.

"Weeping she placed thee in my arms, to bear
To some far spot; what tongue can tell the rest!
The plaints she used; and with what wild despair
She clasped thee to her fond maternal breast:
How many times 'twixt sighs, 'twixt tears caressed;
How oft, how very oft her vain adieu
Sealed on thy cheek; with what sweet passion pressed
Thy little lips! at length a glance she threw
To Heaven, and cried; 'Great God, that look'st all spirits through!—

XXVII.

"'If both my heart and members are unstained,
And nought did e'er my nuptial bed defile,—
(I pray not for myself; I stand arraigned
Of thousand sins, and in thy sight am vile;)
Preserve this guiltless infant, to whose smile
The tenderest mother must refuse her breast,
And from her eyes their sweetest bliss exile!
May she with chastity like mine be blessed;
But stars of happier rule have influence o'er the rest!

XXVIII.

"'And thou, blest knight, that from the cruel teeth
Of the grim dragon freed'st that holy maid,
Lit by my hands if ever odorous wreath
Rose from thy altars; if I e'er have laid
Thereon gold, cinnamon, or myrrh, and prayed
For help, through every chance of life display,
In guardianship of her, thy powerful aid!'
Convulsions choked her words,—she swooned away—
And the pale hues of death on her chill temples lay.

XXIX.

"With tears I took thee, in a little ark
So hid by flowers and leaves that none could guess
The secret, brought thee forth 'twixt light and dark,
And, unsuspected, in a Moorish dress,
Passed the town walls: as through a wilderness
Of forests horrid with brown glooms, I took
My pensive way, I saw, to my distress,
A tigress issuing from a bosky nook,
Rage in her scowling brows, and lightning in her look.

XXX.

"Wild with affright, I on the flowery ground
Cast thee, and instant climbed a tree close by;
The savage brute came up, and glancing round
In haughty menace, saw where thou didst lie;
And, softening to a mild humanity
Her stern regard, with placid gestures meek,
As by thy beauty smit, came courteous nigh;
In amorous pastime fawning licked thy cheek;
And thou on her didst smile, and stroke her mantle sleek.

XXXI.

"With her fierce muzzle and her cruel front
Thy little hands did innocently play;
She offered thee her teats, as is the wont
With nurses, and adapted them, as they,
To thy young lips; nor didst thou turn away,—
She suckled thee! a prodigy so new
Filled me with fresh confusion and dismay:
She, when she saw thee satisfied, withdrew
Into the shady wood, and vanished from my view.

XXXII.

"Again I took thee, and pursued my way
Through woods, and vales, and wildernesses dun;
Till in a little village making stay,
I gave thee secretly in charge to one,
Who fondly nursed thee till the circling sun
With sixteen months of equatorial heat,
Had tinged thy face; till thou too hadst begun
To prattle of thy joys in murmurs sweet,
And print her cottage floor with indecisive feet.

XXXIII.

"But, having passed the autumn of my years,
As sprightly vigour failed and life declined,
Rich in the gold that with her farewell tears
Thy bounteous mother to my hands consigned,
I for my native country inly pined;
After my many toils and wanderings wide,
I longed amidst old faces left behind,
In my dear birthplace tranquil to reside,
And spend life's wintry eve at my own warm fireside.

XXXIV.

"To Egypt then, where first my eyes unclosed,
I took, conducting thee, a secret road,
And reached a flood, to equal risks exposed,—
Here robbers chased me, there the torrent flowed:
What should I do? resign my cherished load?
No! yet how shun the meditated theft?
A moment's thought hereon when I bestowed,
I braved the stream; with one bold arm I cleft
Venturous the roaring waves, and bore thee in my left.

XXXV.

"Swift as an arrow flowed the flood; midway,
The jangling tides for ever boil and spin;
There, as a curling snake devours its prey,
The volumed whirlpool gaped, and sucked me in;
Giddy, tossed round, distracted with the din,
Thee then I missed; but the wild waves upbore,—
Propitious breezes caught thy garments thin,
And laid thee safe on the smooth sandy shore;
Which I at length too reached, when hope almost was o'er.

XXXVI.

"With joy I took thee up; eve's dusky light
The landscape veiled, when, slumbering on the sand,
Methought the figure of a frowning knight
Came near, and pointing at my breast his brand,
Imperiously exclaimed; 'No more withstand
The solemn charge with which thou long hast striven,
A mother's precept! christen, I command,
This babe, the choice inheritant of heaven;—
To my peculiar care the orphan child is given.

XXXVII.

"'"'Twas I gave mercy to the' infuriate brute,
Life to the wind, and mildness to the stream;
And woe to thee, if thou my words dispute,
Or as a vacant phantom disesteem
The heavenly form I am!' with morn's first beam
I woke, and, shaking off the dews of night,
Went forward; but, as false I judged the dream,
And true my faith, I scrupled not to slight
The angel's threat, and still withheld the sacred rite;—

XXXVIII.

"But as a Pagan bred thee, nor revealed
The secret of thy birth; whilst thou hast grown
Valiant in arms, the phœnix of the field,
And o'er thy sex and Nature's self hast shown
Thyself victorious; hosts hast thou o'erthrown;
Won riches, realms, and palms for ever green;—
What since has happened, thou thyself hast known;
And how in peace, in battle I have been
Thy sire at once and slave, through each succeeding scene.

XXXIX.

"Last morn a sleep, the simile of death,
Ere yet the stars had faded from the sky,
Sank on my soul, and by our holy faith
Again thy Genius in my sleep passed by;
But haughtier was his look, more fierce his cry,—
'Traitor!' he said, 'the hour to disunite
Clorinda from the bonds of earth draws nigh;
Mine shall she yet become in thy despite;
Be thine the woe!' he frowned, and heavenward took his flight.

XL.

"Thus, then, be warned! for sadly I suspect
O'er thee, my love, strange accidents impend;
Perhaps the heavens are wroth when we reject
The faith our wise forefathers did commend;
Perhaps that faith is true; oh, condescend,
Deign, I entreat thee, to put off this vest
Of sable, deign thy purpose to suspend!"
He ceased, and wept; fear thrilled her pensive breast,
For on her heart a like remembered vision pressed.

XLI.

But soon her aspect she serened, and said;
"This faith, which surely strikes my mind as true,
Which thou wouldst have me doubt in thy vain dread,
The faith that with my nurse's milk I drew,
Still will I keep; nor yet resign (beshrew
The soul that would!) my old heroic spear,
And plighted purpose; no, not if I knew
That Death, with that fierce visage which strikes fear
Into the hearts of men, would dog me as a deer!"

XLII.

She soothes him, smiles on him, and straight retires,
For now the hurrying hours to action call;
And with the dauntless hero who desires
To share her hazard, seeks the palace hall:
Ismeno joins them, and with words of gall
Spurs on the daring hearts that little need
Renewed excitements; gives to each a ball
Of pitch and sulphur; in a hollow reed
Shuts up the fatal flame, and bids them do the deed.

XLIII.

Charged, they depart; and over dale and hill
Circling the valleys, through the darkness scud
With speed incessant, side by side, until
They near the spot where the vast engine stood;
There high their spirit rises, hot the blood
Boils in their veins; desire and scorn combine
To cheer them on, and in their madding mood,
Drawn are their swords; the watch behold the shine
Of coming arms, and loud demand the passing sign.

XLIV.

Mute they move on; "To arms!" exclaim the guard;
Their sudden shouts the valiant couple stun,
But nought their generous enterprise retard,—
They bound abroad, and all concealment shun:
As from the' electric cloud or levelled gun,
At the same instant comes the flash, the thunder,
And bolt of ruin; so for them to run,
Arrive, strike, penetrate, and cleave asunder
The phalanx, is but one, one moment's work of wonder.

XLV.

Through thousand arms, amidst a thousand blows
They pass, and execute their glorious aim;
Their glimmering lights secreted they disclose,
And tip the black combustible with flame;
Tossed, to the tower it fixes; words are tame
To picture how it creeps, expands, aspires;
How soon it runs o'er all the timbered frame;
How thick the smoke, and in what billowy gyres,
Climbs to the lofty stars, and cloaks their shining fires.

XLVI.

Vast globes of fire amid the ceaseless whirl
Of smoke voluminous, now dim, now bright
As the cloud fluctuates, high to heaven upcurl,—
The blustering winds add fury to their flight:
Then joined the scattered flames; a sudden light
Strikes the awed host,—they arm in mute amaze;
'Tis done! the pile, so terrible in fight,
Sinks in a lofty, broad, columnar blaze;
And one brief hour destroys the workmanship of days.

XLVII.

Two bands meantime to where the pile is burning
Haste from the Camp; which when Argantes sees,
He shouts, "Your blood shall quench the fire!" and turning
His sword against them, with wild menaces
Keeps them at bay; but, yielding by degrees
With fair Clorinda, to the brown hill's bent
Retires, while fast behind the crowds increase,
Like headlong floods which August rains augment;
Hotly they press the chase, and climb with them the ascent.

XLVIII.

The Golden Gate turns on its hinge; and there,
With his armed people stands the Turkish King,
Ready to welcome back the dauntless pair,
If favouring fortune should them homeward bring;
High o'er the ruins of the fosse they spring
Before a grove of spears—the Soldan stout
Gives the known word, the portals wide they fling,
Drive back the Franks, and, wheeling swift about,
Close the strong gates—alas! these shut Clorinda out.

XLIX.

For at the moment when the Turks let fall
The pendulous portcullis, forth she flew
To wreak her ire on Arimon the tall,
Whose daring sword had cut her hauberk through;
This she revenged, nor yet Argantes knew
That she was separate from his side; the glare
Of steel, the anarchy of fight, the crew
That pressed behind, and denseness of the air,
Wholly his sight confused, distracting every care.

L.

But when her sultry anger she had quenched
In the proud blood of dying Arimon,
Saw the gates closed, and how she stood intrenched,
She deemed Clorinda utterly undone,
And looked alone for death; but soon, as none
Pierced her disguise, fresh hopes of safety rose
With other turns of wit; she feigns her one
Of the same troop, a bold demeanour shews,
And with cool unconcern slips in amidst her foes.

LI.

Then, as the still wolf glides to the green wood,
Conscious of crime, and in close ambush lies;
So, by the tumult favoured, and unviewed,
Through the dun shade of the nocturnal skies,
Dissevered from the press, Clorinda flies:
Tancred alone, it seems, the secret knew
Both of her fatal chance and sly device;
Arriving there as Arimon she slew,
He saw her, marked her out, and kept in constant view.

LII.

Her would he fight with, deeming her a man
Glorious in arms as lively in address;
Around the winding ramparts swift she ran,
In at some other gate to gain access;
As swift behind her did the' avenger press;
Nor was it long, ere on the gusty breath
Of the night-wind she heard, with some distress,
The sound of arms; whence, turning, "Halt!" she saith:
"What fleet foot news bring'st thou?" he answered, "War and death!"

LIII.

"War shalt thou have," said she, "and death, if these
Are thy request;" and here her step she stayed;
Tancred his steed abandons, when he sees
His foe on foot, by lonely hills embayed:
Then she her sabre, he his poignant blade
Draws from the sheath; they stand as mortal foes
Wrath nerves the hero, haughtiness the maid;
Like two young bulls each smarting with the throes
Of envy, rage, and love, in desperate strife they close.

LIV.

Worthy of royal lists, and the clear shine
Of suns would be the battle, if descried;
Dark Abbess! thou that in thy Gothic scrine
The mouldering relics of their tale dost hide!
Grant me to lift thy cowl, to waft aside
The curtain, and in radiant numbers braid
Their deeds, for endless ages to abide;
So with their glory, glorious shall be made,
In page of high Romance, the memory of thy shade.

LV.

They shrink not, trifle not, strive not to smite
By artificial rules, with wary will;
Stand not on postures or on points, the night
And their blind rage forbid the tricks of skill;
But swords crash horribly with swords, and shrill
The mountain echo shrieks along the plain;
Not a foot stirs,—where stood, there stand they still;
But aye their hands in motion they maintain;
And not a lounge, or foin, or slash descends in vain.

LVI.

Shame stings disdain to vengeance, vengeance breeds
New shame,—thus passion runs a ceaseless round;
To spite despite, to rage fresh rage succeeds,
The agony to strike, the lust to wound:
And now the battle blends in narrower ground;
No room have they to foin, no room to lash;
Their blades flung back, like butting rams they bound,
Fight with the hilts, wild, savage, raging, rash,
And shield at sounding shield, and helm at helmet dash.

LVII.

Thrice in his boisterous arms the maid he pressed,
And thrice was forced to loose his sinewy clasp;
She had no fancy to be so caressed;
Empassioned Love is not an angry asp.
Again with eagerness their swords they grasp,
And tinge them ruddy as Vesuvian fire,
In blood of many wounds; till, tired, they gasp
For very breath,—some paces back retire;
And from their long fatigues all pantingly respire.

LVIII.

Faint on their swords, with like exhausted frame,
Alike they rest, and echo gaze for gaze:
Fades the last star; Aurora, robed in flame,
Unbars Elysium, and the morning plays;
Tancred perceives, beneath its grateful rays,
From her the trickling blood profusely rain,
And glories in the languor she displays;
Oh man, vain man! poor fool of pride and pain!
Puffed up with every breath from Fortune's wavering vane!

LIX.

Why that proud smile? sad, oh how sad, shall be
Thy acted triumphs when the' illusion clears!
Thine eyes shall weep, if still the light they see,
For every drop of blood a sea of tears:
Thus resting, gazing, full of hopes and fears,
The bleeding warriors, silent as the dead,
Stood for a space; at length some feelings fierce
Tancred deposed,—kind thoughts rose in their stead,
He wished her name to know, and, breaking silence, said;

LX.

"Hard is our chance, our prowess thus to spend
On deeds which silence and these shades conceal;
To which thwart Fortune yields no praise, no friend
On our viewed acts to set his speaking seal!
Yet, if amid the sullen shock of steel
Prayers may have access, courtesies find place,
Thy name, thy country, and thy rank reveal;
That I, whatever issue crown the case,
May know at least who gives my death or victory grace."

LXI.

Sternly she said; "Thy prayer no access wins;
Custom forbids; but, whatsoe'er my name,
Thou seest before thee one of those brave twins,
Who gave your towering structure to the flame."
Fired at her answer, Tancred made exclaim;
"In evil hour hast thou thy guilt avowed;
Thy speech and silence are to me the same,
Discourteous wretch, contemptible as proud!
Both chide my sloth, and both for vengeance plead aloud."

LXII.

Rage to their hearts returns, and spurs them on,
Though weak, to war; dire war! from which the sleights
Of art are banished, whence all strength is gone,
And in the room of both, brute fury fights:
Oh, sharp his falchion, sharp her sabre smites!
What bloody gaps they make through plate and chain,
In their soft flesh! revenge, revenge requites;
If life parts not, 't is only that disdain
Knits it in pure despite to the rebellious brain.

LXIII.

As the deep Euxine, though the wind no more
Blows, that late tossed its billows to the stars,
Stills not at once its rolling and its roar,
But with its coasts long time conflicting jars;
Thus, though their quickly-ebbing blood debars
Force from their blades as vigour from their arms,
Still lasts the frenzy of the flame which Mars
Blew in their breasts; sustained by whose strong charms,
Yet heap they strokes on strokes, yet harms inflict on harms.

LXIV.

But now, alas! the fatal hour arrives
That must shut up Clorinda's life in shade;
In her fair bosom deep his sword he drives;
'T is done—life's purple fountain bathes the blade!
The golden flowered cymar of light brocade,
That swathed so tenderly her breasts of snow,
Is steeped in the warm stream: the hapless maid
Feels her end nigh; her knees their strength forego;
And her enfeebled frame droops languishing and low.

LXV.

He, following up the thrust with taunting cries,
Lays the pierced Virgin at his careless feet;
She as she falls, in mournful tones outsighs,
Her last faint words, pathetically sweet;
Which a new spirit prompts, a spirit replete
With charity, and faith, and hope serene,
Sent dove-like down from God's pure mercy-seat;
Who, though through life his rebel she had been,
Would have her die a fond repentant Magdalene.

LXVI.

"Friend, thou hast won; I pardon thee, and oh
Forgive thou me! I fear not for this clay,
But my dark soul—pray for it, and bestow
The sacred rite that laves all stains away:"
Like dying hymns heard far at close of day,
Sounding I know not what in the soothed ear
Of sweetest sadness, the faint words make way
To his fierce heart, and, touched with grief sincere,
Streams from his pitying eye the' involuntary tear.

LXVII.

Not distant, gushing from the rocks, a rill
Clashed on his ear; to this with eager pace
He speeds—his hollow casque the waters fill—
And back he hurries to the deed of grace;
His hands as aspens tremble, whilst they raise
The locked aventayle of the unknown knight;—
God, for thy mercy! 't is her angel face!
Aghast and thunderstruck, he loathes the light;
Ah, knowledge best unknown! ah, too distracting sight!

LXVIII.

Yet still he lived; and mustering all his powers
To the sad task, restrained each wild lament,
Fain to redeem by those baptismal showers
The life his sword bereft; whilst thus intent
The hallowing words he spoke, with ravishment
Her face transfigured shone, and half apart
Her bland lips shed a lively smile that sent
This silent speech in sunshine to his heart:
"Heaven gleams; in blissful peace behold thy friend depart!"

LXIX.

A paleness beauteous as the lily's mixt
With the sweet violet's, like a gust of wind
Flits o'er her face; her eyes on Heaven are fixt,
And heaven on her returns its looks as kind:
Speak she can not; but her cold hand, declined,
In pledge of peace on Tancred she bestows;
And to her fate thus tenderly resigned,
In her meek beauty she expires, and shows
But as a smiling saint indulging soft repose.

LXX.

But when he saw her starlike spirit set,
The self-possession which had manned his soul,
Bent to the storm of anguishing regret
That o'er his bosom burst beyond control:
Pangs of despair convulsed his heart; life stole
As to its last recess; death's icy dew
Bathed his pale brow, his blood forebore to roll;
Till like the breathless dead the living grew,
In chillness, silence, air, and attitude, and hue.

LXXI.

And sure his life, impatient of the light,
Struggling had burst in its rebellious scorn
From its weak chain, and followed in its flight
The beauteous spirit, that, but just re-born,
Had spread its wings in sunshine of the morn,—
Had not a party of the Franks, dispread
In search of water o'er the gleaming lawn,
By providential guidance thither led,
Seen where he lay supine, the dying by the dead.

LXXII.

Their Chief, though distant, by his armour knew
The Latin Prince, and hastened to the place;
The lifeless beauty he remembered too
For Tancred's love, and mourned her fatal case;
He would not leave a form so full of grace,
Albeit a Pagan, as he deemed, a prey
To wolves, but lifting, in a little space,
To others' arms both bodies whence they lay,
Took straight to Tancred's tent his melancholy way.

LXXIII.

Not yet the knight, so equably and slow
They marched, from his dark trance awakened was;
But feeble groans at intervals might shew
Some sands still glided in his vital glass;
The Lady lay a mute and stirless mass,
Nor breath, nor pulse gave hope that life was there
Incorporate with its beauty: thus they pass;
Thus, side by side, the two, lamenting bear;
And in adjoining rooms dispose with silent care.

LXXIV.

His pitying squires drew nigh; with busy pain
Chafed his chill temples, and his mail unbound,
His languid eyes at length he oped again,
Felt the physician's hand, the smarting wound,
And heard, yet dubious of his sense, the sound
Of whispering lips,—where was he, and with whom
Long with bewildered gaze he looked around;
At length his squires, at length he knew the room,
And in low feeble words lamented thus his doom:

LXXV.

"Yet do I breathe? yet live to view the beams
Of this curst day, more odious than the shade?
Clear witness of my blind misdeed, it streams
To' accuse my rashness, and my guilt upbraid:
Ah, coward hand! why now art thou afraid,
Thou, so well versed in all the turns of strife,
The impious minister of death repaid
In infamy, to grasp the vengeful knife,
And cut the pall-black thread of this opprobrious life!

LXXVI.

"Take the fell steel, and hide it to the hilt
Within me,—my sad heart in sunder cleave!
But thou, perhaps, inured to deeper guilt,
May'st deem it mercy such quick ease to give:
Then as a dire example let me live,
Monster of luckless Love! a mark for men
To point at and abhor; this base reprieve
To shameful life will be the' alone fit pain
For such enormous guilt, and of so dark a grain.

LXXVII.

"Vext by just Furies, anguish, grief, and care,
A wandering maniac must I live—to run,
Shrieking, from phantoms with which sleep shall scare
My soul, when Night her orgies has begun;
To hold in horror and in hate the Sun,
That did my fatal error shew; to eye
Myself with fear, and strive myself to shun;—
Evermore flying, evermore to fly,
Whilst hell's pursuing fiends are ever howling nigh!

LXXVIII.

"But where, alas, where lie the relics chaste
Of my slain angel? what my cruel scorn
Left whole, perchance some savage of the waste—
The lion mangles, or the wolf has torn;
Ah spoils, for them too rich! dear beauty, born
To different end! too sweet, too precious fruit!
Poor injured maiden! whom the shades forlorn
And lone hills have betrayed, first in dispute
To me, and next in prey to some ferocious brute.

LXXIX.

"Yet will I go, and the loved spoils collect;
Dear limbs! where late the hues of beauty bloomed
But if the wolf, in hungry disrespect,
Those virgin relics has indeed consumed,
In the same cavern let me be entombed,
Let the same jaws ingulf me! hailed by me
Will the stroke come; but, preyed on or inhumed,
A glorious sepulchre, my love, 't will be,
Where'er thy bones are cast, to be inurned with thee."

LXXX.

But being told that her lamented form
Lay in his tent, a beam of joy appeared,
Like lightning flashing through a sable storm,
To light his aspect, and the darkness cleared;
Straight from the couch of his repose he reared
The heavy burden of his limbs, and slow—
Weak as an infant, full of pain, but cheered
By her dear image, thither strove to go,
On frail unsteady steps, loose staggering to and fro.

LXXXI.

But when he came, and in her beauteous breast
Saw the red gash his murderous hand had made,
And her late radiant aspect calmed to rest,
Like a nocturnal sky, in livid shade—
His heightening colour was perceived to fade;
A trembling ague rocked his frame; and there
Would he have sunk, but for immediate aid;
"Sweet face," he sighed, "thou canst make death look fair,
But hast not power to soothe or sweeten my despair!

LXXXII.

"Fair hand! dear pledge of pardoning amity!
Late forceful pleader, uttering love's farewell!
What do I find thee now? ah, what am I!
And you, light limbs, that did in flight excel
The graceful motions of the fleet gazelle,
What but upbraiding vestiges are ye
Of my irreparable rage? too well
My stony eyes and cruel hand agree,
When, what the one destroyed, the other brooks to see;—

LXXXIII.

"And see without a tear! then weep, my blood,
Since my remorseless eyes to weep forbear!"
Frantic he spoke; and in his madding mood,
Strong with desire of death, began to tear
His hands away, and to his nails laid bare
Each irritated wound,—the blood like rain
Gushed forth, and in this fit of wild despair
He must have died, had not excess of pain
Caused him to swoon away, and life perforce retain.

LXXXIV.

Borne to his bed again, his fluttering sprite
Back to its hated mansion they reclaim;
The dire mischance and anguish of the knight
This while was widely spread by babbling fame;
And thither came the Chief; and thither came,
With his loved friends, the Solitary Sage;
But neither grave admonishment could tame,
Nor pity soothe, nor gentlest prayers assuage
Of his distracted grief the stubbornness and rage.

LXXXV.

As in a tender limb the serpent's sting,
With oils fomented, doth the keener smart;
So their kind solaces of love but bring
Acuter pangs to his afflicted heart!
But reverend Peter, who the faithful part
Of a good shepherd ever undertook
With his sick flock, blest counsels to impart,
His long romantic passion would rebuke,
And from its frenzied trance, his wilful spirit shook:

LXXXVI.

"O Tancred! Tancred! how unlike that mind,
Whose first unfoldings did so bright appear!
What cloud, what darkness does thy vision blind,
What sorcery shuts thy intellectual ear?
This thy sore trouble is instruction clear
Sent from the Lord; dost thou not see the ray
That would direct thy feet? dost thou not hear
The voice that calls thee to the safer way,
Wherein thou first didst walk, whence now thy footsteps stray?

LXXXVII.

"To actions worthy thy first love, his voice
Recals thee, vowed to this divine crusade;
Which thou hast left (unwise, unworthy choice!)
For the blind worship of a Pagan maid.
Happy misfortune! Heaven on thee has laid
In tenderest clemency its chastening rod;
Thy fault, thyself has it the agent made
Of thine own good; and is it in this mode
That thou the gift receiv'st, and own'st the grace bestowed?

LXXXVIII.

"Scorn'st thou then, ingrate, the salubrious gift
Of God, with God incensed? unhappy! think
Whither this angry whirlwind bears thee—swift
O'er dark Eternity's tremendous brink;
Down the deep precipice about to sink,
Thou hang'st at mercy of the slenderest breath;
Call, I entreat, call back thy senses, shrink
From the momentous danger, look beneath,
And curb this impious woe, that leads to endless death!"

LXXXIX.

That second death the sufferer's soul alarmed,
And, all relinquishing his wish to die,
Their soothing words he entertained, and calmed
The hurricane within; yet still a sigh—
A groan at times escaped; by fits his eye
Would weep, and his sad tongue lament aloud,
Now holding with himself wild colloquy,
Now with his love, who from some rosy cloud
To his fond plaints perchance an ear of pity bowed.

XC.

On her at smile of morn, for her at frown
Of eve he calls, he murmurs, and complains;
Like a lorn nightingale when some rude clown
Has stol n her plumeless brood; in piercing strains
She fills the dying winds, and woods, and plains
With her sweet quarrel; all night long she weeps,
And to the listening stars repeats her pains,
Till morn with rosy tears the forest steeps;—
Then on his streaming eyes awhile calm slumber creeps.

XCI.

And, clad in starry robes, the maid for whom
He mourned, appears amid his morning dreams;
Fairer than erst, but by the deathless bloom
And heavenly radiance that around her beams,
Graced, not disguised; in sweetest act she seems
To stoop, and wipe away the tears that flow
From his dim eyes: "Behold what glory streams
Round me," she cries; "how beauteous now I show,
And for my sake, dear friend, this waste of grief forego!

XCII.

"Thee for my bliss I thank; Earth's sordid clod
Thou by a happy error forced to quit,
And for the glorious Paradise of God
By sacred baptism mad'st my spirit fit:
There now midst angels and blest saints I sit
In rapturous love and fellowship divine;
There may our souls together yet be knit,
And there in fields where suns eternal shine,
Shalt thou at once enjoy their loveliness and mine;—

XCIII.

"If by thy passions unseduced, if thou
Grudge not thyself the bliss; live then, Sir Knight,
Know that I love thee, far as Love can bow
For aught of earthly mould a Child of Light!"
As thus she spoke, her glowing eyes shone bright
With an immortal's fervour—rosy red,
She in the mild irradiance shut from sight
Her face—like a sweet flower, her fans outspread,
And in his drooping soul celestial comfort shed.

XCIV.

Soothed he awoke, and to the hands discreet
Of skilled practitioners his wounds resigned;
The whilst his friends interred, with spices sweet,
The limbs late vital with so great a mind:
And if the tomb to which they were consigned
Was not of pure Pentelican, nor graced
With sculptures planned by architects refined,
The stone was choice, and wrought with all the taste
The urgent time allowed, in form antiquely chaste.

XCV.

There by bright lamps that in long order shine,
With many a dirge, her bones in earth they lay;
And on the smooth trunk of a leafless pine
Her arms, hung round with cypress and with bay,
In trophy to her fame aloft display;
And thither did the Prince his footsteps turn
All languid as he was, at break of day,
With awe and melancholy calm concern,
Unseen her grave to view, and clasp her reverenced urn.

XCVI.

When reached the tomb, his spirit's dolorous goal,
Prescribed by Heaven's inscrutable decree,
Long on the pile, mute, motionless, and pale,
His hollow eyes in absent reverie
He fixed: at length to his relief a sea
Of tears gushed forth; and, gathering voice, he said,
His accents prefaced with a sigh; "Oh ye
So loved, so honoured tablets of the dead,
In which my soul abides, o'er which my tears are shed!—

XCVII.

"Not of unliving dust are ye the shrine,
But Love's quick ashes, canonised by woe;
From you I catch his wonted fires divine,
Less sweet, less grateful, but as warm they glow;
Take the sad sighs and kisses I bestow,
Bathed in the fondest tears that ever blessed
The grave of luckless beauty; take, and oh
Convey each sigh breathed forth, each kiss impressed,
To the beloved remains that in your bosom rest!

XCVIII.

"For if to her fair spoils that fairest Saint
E'er gives a glance, thy pity and my love
Will not offend; since, neither can the taint
Of scorn or hatred reach the blest above;
She who forgave my crime, can ne'er reprove
My zeal—this hope alone my tears can dry;
It was, she knows, my hand alone that drove
The murdering sword; nor can it irk that I,
Who lived adoring her, adoringly should die.

XCIX.

"And die adoring her I shall; blest day,
Whenever it arrives! but far more blest,
If as now round thy polished sides I stray,
I then be taken to thy sacred breast!
Ah! let our blending souls together rest
In heaven, our ashes in the self-same tomb!
If I by death be of the bliss possessed
Which life denied me,—might I but presume
This, this to hope indeed, delightful were my doom!"

C.

Meanwhile in Salem, of Clorinda's fall
At first confused and floating whispers rise;
Till, ascertained and soon divulged, through all
The' astonished City the loud rumour flies,
Mingled with tears, and shrieks, and women's cries;
As though the town itself, the sacred town,
Were now by storm become the victor's prize;
And in the rage of flying flames went down
Their temples, spires, abodes, and towers of old renown.

CI.

But every eye was on Arsetes turned,
Who stood, a piteous spectacle of care;
He not as others his dear mistress mourned;
His eyeballs, stony with supreme despair,
Shed not a tear; but fiercely did he tear
His face, his bosom, and with ashes strowed
The hoary honours of his silver hair:
As thus he drew the' attention of the crowd,
Midst them Argantes came, and thus harangued aloud:

CII.

"Much did I wish, when conscious that the gate
Was closed against the' incomparable maid,
To follow straight,—I ran to share her fate,
Protect her life, or be beside her laid;
What did I not? what said I not? I prayed,
Adjured the King, by all that was most dear,
To' unbar the gates: he, of the Franks afraid,
Denied my suit, though tendered with a tear;
And, men of Syria! he has sole dominion here.

CIII.

"Ah! had I then gone forth, or safe from strife
I the brave heroine had brought off, or closed
Where she has made earth purple, my sad life
In memorable decease, a glorious ghost!
But what could I do more? the starry host,
And counsels both of Gods and men were set
In adverse influence, to my wish opposed;
Cold in her grave the Virgin lies; but yet,
There are some mournful dues which I will ne'er forget.

CIV.

"Hear, all Jerusalem, my vow! Heaven, hear!
And, if I fail my promise to fulfil,
Blast me with fire! deep, deep revenge I swear,
On the base Frank that did Clorinda kill!
Never from battle shall my sword lie still,
However fully fleshed upon the foe;
Ne'er be dissevered from my side, until
I stab curst Tancred to the heart, and throw
His ruffian carcase out, to feed the hound and crow?"

CV.

The warrior ceased; and to his fieree harangue
From the soothed crowds applauding shouts succeed;
Hushed their sore weeping, lost is every pang,
In the mere fancy of the' expected deed.
Oh blind, presumptuous vow! far different seed
Than flowering hope imagines, to his scythe
Time will devote; thyself, thyself shalt bleed,
In equal battle bleed, and dying writhe
Beneath his sword o'er whom thou now exultest blithe!

CANTO XIII.

Stanza xlvi.

ARGUMENT.

Ismeno frees the Demons of the Deep
To guard the forests; the mere sight of these,
Scares from the regions they are set to keep
The men who come to cut the shady trees:
There Tancred boldly ventures, and with ease
Enters the grove, but foolish love o'erpowers
His shew of courage; meanwhile not a breeze
Stirs,—heat, excessive heat the earth devours,
And the sick camp decays, till blest with copious showers.

I.

Scarce was the vast, tower-tempesting machine
To ashes sunk, than, further to secure
The City respited from storm, Ismene
New artifices planned, by rites impure,
And added spells tremendous, to ensure
The army's ruin, and prevent the fall
Of fresh materials from the groves obscure:
That so no second store of engines tall
Might Sion's gates bombard, or rend her sacred wall.

II.

Near the encampment of the Christians, grows,
Mid solitary valleys, old and vast,
A forest, thick with mossy trees, whose boughs
A solemn horror far in compass cast:
There, when the golden sun at noon rides past
In clearest glory, a discoloured light,
Malignant, such as falls from skies o'ercast,
When night with day, or day disputes with night,
Streams through its hoary glades, and daunts the' uncertain sight.

III.

But when the sun departs, immediate clouds
And horror, black as hell, the place invade;
Darkness—which blinds the vision, and which crowds
The heart with fears; for pasture or for shade
There never goatherd drives his goats, dismayed,
Herdsman his herds; there never shepherds sound
Their lively reeds; nor in its nodding glade
Enter faint pilgrims, but, with awe profound,
Point as they pass, and shun far-off the' unlucky ground.

IV.

Here at deep midnight, borne on clouds and storms,
Foul witches gather to their blasted green,
Each with her mate, and take the frightful forms
Of dragon, pard, or bearded goat obscene;
A council loathsome, infamous, unclean;
That oft with false presentments and delights,
Allure from goodness: hither they convene,
To hold in pomp, by Hecate's pale lights,
Their impious marriage feasts and bacchanalian rites.

V.

So goes belief; and from its haunted bowers
Nor bough nor twig the natives ever rent;
But these the Franks, since for their rams and towers
None others served, invade with one consent.
Here now the Sorcerer came, malevolent,
At next dead noon of night,—the hour that best
Suits his black science: not a whisper went
Through the wild woods, when, wrapt in coal-black vest,
His magic rounds he traced, his mystic signs impressed.

VI.

One naked foot he in the charmed ring
Set, murmuring mighty rhymes; nor failed to turn
Thrice to the clime whence first the sunbeams spring,
Thrice to the region gaped where last they burn:
Thrice shook the wand that from the dreary urn
Calls buried phantoms to walk forth again
Incorporate; three times, gloomily and stern,
Stamped with his foot unshod: then spake he; then
Ran these tremendous words through each rebellowing glen:

VII.

"Hear! hear, O ye, whom from the stars of yore
God's flashing thunders smote to deepest hell!
Hear, ye that walk the clouds! hear, ye that pour
The storms abroad, and in the whirlwinds yell!
And you, dark elves of fog, of fire, and fell,
Demons, and ghosts, and demogorgons dire!
Hear, all ye devils that in Avernus dwell,
Grim torturers of the damned! and Thou, their sire,
King of lost kings, that rul'st the shadowy world of fire!

VIII.

"Guard well these groves: elm, cedar, ivy, oak,
I give you told and chronicled aright;
As souls of men in bodies, I invoke
You so to haunt their branches, every sprite;
Chase back with fury, or at least affright
The' insulting Christians, soon as they essay
To reach and fell them!" many an impious rite,
Fell charm, and dreary spell the Wizard grey
Joined, which 't were sin to hear, and blasphemy to say.

IX.

At these fell words each bright star that adorns
The blue of midnight, quenched its fires divine;
The moon, disturbed, drew in her golden horns,
Cloked in black clouds, nor after dared to shine:
Incensed he turns, with aspect more malign,
And stamping shouts; "Not yet do ye appear,
Charged spirits? each to his appointed shrine!
Why this delay? perchance ye wait to hear
Voices more potent yet, and curses more severe!

X.

"I have not yet forgot, from long disuse,
My cruel arts of more effectual fame;
This tongue, I know, can, blooded o'er, break loose
With perfect ease from its control, and frame
That so tremendous sound, that mighty Name,
Which heard, e'en Pluto must start up dismayed,
And hither hurry from his throne of flame;
Which! oh, which if—" more yet he would have said,
But that he inly knew the summons was obeyed.

XI.

Infinite spirits numberless come down;
All that through air on Hell's drear errands flee—
Ghosts of the' abyss, and elves from forests brown,
From cave, mine, fountain, fire, and roaring sea:
Slow, and still trembling at the late decree
Prohibiting from battle, comes, and grieves
The universal swarm; but, bound to be
Seals of the' enchantment, each his charge receives,
Shrined in the mossy trunks, grey boughs, or fluttering leaves.

XII.

Strait to the King the Sorcerer, when aware
That the protecting charm was now complete,
Hied and exclaimed: "Leave every doubt and care;
Thy heart refresh, and of enjoyment treat!
Henceforth in safety stands thy regal seat;
For never shall the Franks have power or heart
Their engines to renew,— so brave a feat
Have I performed;" thus glorying, part by part
He the success narrates of his mysterious art:—

XIII.

Then thus continues: "With my spell the stars
Themselves are charmed, to my no less delight;
Know, that in heavenly Leo raging Mars
Must with the splendid sun erewhile unite
In blest conjunction, and with fever smite
The hostile armies; nought shall cool the glow,—
Winds, airs, nor rains by day, nor dews by night;
Since all the Influences in heaven foreshow
A time of burning heat—pain, wailing, want, and woe.

XIV.

"Drought more intolerable than e'er distressed
Ind, or adust Zahara! us the heat
Will little harm, within a town so blest
With cool delights—fresh shades, and fountains sweet:
But most the sunbeams on our foes will beat;
Who, stretched on sands insufferable as they,
Denied refreshment, hopeless of retreat,
Will to the' Egyptians fall an easy prey,
First smit by Heaven, then swept like locusts clean away.

XV.

"Thou, sitting still, shalt conquer; 't were not wise
To tempt of Fortune then the doubtful smile;
But if the rash Circassian, who decries
All, even honourable repose, revile,
And importune thee in his usual style,
Find thou the means his wilfulness to rein;
Since Heaven's kind Sovereign shall to thee erewhile
Send peace, and to thy foes, consumed with pain,
The sword which, smiting once, need never smite again."

XVI.

Soothed by this speech, the King recovers heart,
And the whole force of Godfrey inly mocks;
He had already well repaired in part
The walls late shattered by the ram's rude shocks;
The rest with iron cramps and mortised blocks
He now secures; nor yet his cares relax;
Round him the total population flocks,—
Freeman, liege, slave,—on all he lays the tax
Of hard, unceasing toil; and warm their labours wax.

XVII.

Meantime the pious Prince resolved no more
To storm by force of arms the strengthened town,
Till rams and towers yet mightier than before,
Should with more sure success his prospects crown;
He therefore sent his soldiers to cut down
Fresh timber for the work: at morning light
They go; in mists the silent forests frown,—
But scarce their sable skirts appear in sight,
Than awe arrests their steps, and fills their souls with fright.

XVIII.

As boys on ivied towers and haunted rooms
At fall of twilight dare not cast an eye,
Fancy a ghost in every thing that glooms,
And, hair on end, from the grim fancy fly:
So when beyond the hills these men descry
The hoar wood nodding to the wind's light wings,
Alarmed, they turn and flee; unconscious why.
Unless that fear before their senses brings
Goblins, chimeras, ouphes, and all unholy things.

XIX.

Back they return, sad, timid, trembling, pale,
Their words confused and various as their fears;
That not a soldier entertains their tale,
But turns to mirth the monstrous things he hears.
Indulgent Godfrey of his cavaliers
Sends a choice troop, in shining arms arrayed,
Who, faced with boldness, strengthening with their spears
The men from harm, might their faint souls persuade
To do his late commands, and pierce the tangled shade.

XX.

Approaching where, in blackest seats embowered
Of savage shade, the wicked fiends fulfil
The wizard's charge, the gloomy forest lowered
In sight,—they tremble, and their blood runs chill;
Yet onward they proceed, concealing ill
Their vile dismay beneath a lively face;
In sinuous windings they descend the hill,
And have so far advanced, that little space
Separates their footsteps now from off the' enchanted place.

XXI.

Sudden a sound comes from the wood, as when
Earth yawns, towers tremble, stedfast mountains quake,
South winds repine in Autumn's yellow glen,
And murmuring billows on the shingles break;
The lion's roar, the hissings of the snake,
The night-wolf's howls are heard, the bear's low moans:
Trumpets and thunders, whisperings that awake
Hideous alarms, and melancholy groans—
All speak in that one sound, though under various tones.

XXII.

The cheeks of all grew pale as death; their fear
A thousand guilty signs declared too plain;
Nor discipline could nerve, nor reason cheer,—
They neither could advance, nor durst remain:
Weak were their efforts, their protection vain
Against the secret influence that confused
Their pride, their courage, and their self-disdain;
At length they fled: their boldest, introduced
To Godfrey's presence, spoke, and thus their flight excused.

XXIII.

"Signior! not one of us can longer vaunt
The power or will those guarded woods to fell:
Spirits, I swear, possess each moving plant;
There grisly Pluto has transferred all hell.
The heart that fearless ventures where they dwell,
Must be of diamond, diamond to the core;
But none save madmen, scornful of the spell
That guards the entrance, would the depths explore,
So loud the savage grove rebellows to their roar."

XXIV.

Thus went his tale. Among the curious crowd
That gathered round, by chance Alcasto stood,
Who both at death and danger laughed aloud,
Rash, stupid, stern, and obstinate of mood;
Not the wild lion roaring o'er his brood,
Nor aught that seems tremendous to mankind,
Ghost, dragon, murderer, wizard of the wood,
Lightning, nor earthquake could appal his mind,
Nor aught that haunts the flood, or walks the roaring wind.

XXV.

He tossed his haughty head, and smiling cried;
"Thither whence this man shrinks let me repair;
I will invade the peopled wood with pride,
Despite its hollow sounds and shapes of air:
No grinning goblin shall my spirit scare,
Nor roar of boughs around, nor scream o'erhead
Of savage birds; most freely will I dare
Its frightful glooms and tangled paths to tread,
Though through the throat of hell descending to the dead."

XXVI.

He waved his armed hand, and with a proud
Contempt stalked off; the wood was soon in view;
Soon the strange roar was heard rebellowing loud,
The timbrels rang, the dreary trumpets blew:
Yet not a step the' audacious man withdrew;
Secure and scornful as at first, he sought
An open glade of pine and spreading yew;
The charmed soil he trod,—when, swift as thought,
Upsprang a guardian fire, and with the' intruder fought.

XXVII.

Wide and aloft the smoking fires extend,
And, in the form of high embattled walls,
Gird the green wood and from his blade defend,
That not the slenderest branch or sapling falls;
The loftier flames roll into gorgeous halls
Fantastically towered, and fortified
With warlike engines darting sulphurous balls,
To guard this new Gehenna; whilst, more wide,
Rocks climbed the clouds, with gold and burning crimson dyed.

XXVIII.

Oh, what strange monsters, armed, in guard appear
On the tall battlements! a hideous row!
Glare with their Gorgon eyes, and frequent rear
Their clashing arms, with many a menaced blow!
At length he fled; and though his flight was slow
As the grim lion's when in distant chase
Held by the hunter, still he fled the foe;
Sad fear—till then a thing unknown, found place
Within his boisterous heart, and paled his daring face.

XXIX.

Nor was he conscious that he fled e'en yet;
But when to distance he had gone, disdain—
A wild amazement, anguishing regret,
And deep repentance stung his fretful brain:
Crimsoning 'twixt shame and grief, he passed the plain;
Turned from the crowd his devious steps aside:
And, stealing to his tent, essayed in vain
From human eyes his downcast face to hide—
That face, so late the seat of all-despising pride.

XXX.

To Godfrey called, he lingers, makes delays,
And tries to shun the summons, all he can;
Forced, he at length arrives, but nothing says,
Or wildly babbles like a sleeping man:
Well in his faltering speech, and face now wan,
Now flushed with shame unusual, Godfrey saw
Flight and defeat; and "How," he thus began,
"Is this? or is it witchcraft strikes this awe,
Or Nature's high portents, transcending Nature's law?

XXXI.

"But if there yet be one whose noble breast
To pierce the grove with brave ambition beats,
Free let him try the' adventure, and at least
Bring news more certain from its dark retreats."
Thus spake the Duke: and thrice those savage seats
Were tried, successive days, at his desire,
By chiefs most famed for high romantic feats;
Yet forced, yet fain was each one to retire,
Scared by the sounds, the sights, the monsters, and the fire.

XXXII.

This chanced whilst Tancred paid the last sad rite
To his loved lady: weak he was, and pale;
His eyes still sickened at the cheerful light,
His steps were feeble, and his members frail;
Ill could he bear the weight of helm or mail;
Yet now, since all his wished assistance claim,
Nor toil deters him, nor can danger quail;
Warm to his heart fresh life with courage came,
New strung his sinewy joints, and fortified his frame.

XXXIII.

He, silent, calm, collecting all his soul,
Fearless, yet heedful, sought the forest vast;
And the drear aspect of the wood, the roll
Of thunder, clouds, the earthquake and the blast,
Firmly sustained, amazed, but not aghast;—
His heart a little moment beat more high,
But sank as soon; and forward still he passed:
When, sudden, in the sylvan region nigh,
The fiery city rose, whose turrets touched the sky.

XXXIV.

Back stept the Prince, and made a moment's pause,
Inly debating: "What will arms serve here?
In the devouring flames and monsters' jaws
Shall I leap headlong then? yet wherefore fear!
Ne'er will the brave man count his life too dear,
When public good the sacrifice demands;
But neither will he draw too rashly near
The scene where Ruin with a hundred hands
Deals death; and surely such, is this which here expands.

XXXV.

"Yet, if I fly, what will our armies say?
What other forest can they hope to fell?
Will Godfrey cease the' adventure to essay?
And shall another break the' unholy spell?
This fire, although the simile of hell,
May be in fact less fierce, by fiends prepared
To daunt, not harm;—whichever way, 'tis well;
Let the worst come!" this said, with blade unbared,
He through the' eruption leaped,—oh, risk divinely dared!

XXXVI.

He felt no raging heat, no fervent glow,
His arms undimmed, unscorched his naked face;
If real flame, or glittering fairy show,
He knew not rightly in so short a space;
For, soon as touched, the visionary blaze—
Turrets, domes, towers, and apparitions drear,
Melted in mist, blue mist, that in their place
Brought glooms and clouds; the wind and tempest near
Hailed, thundered, howled—dispersed, and heaven again shone clear.

XXXVII.

Amazed, but still intrepid, Tancred stood;
And, when the echoing storm at distance died,
Trod with slow steps secure the' unhallowed wood,
And all its hoary scenes and secrets eyed;
No farther signs or prodigies he spied;
Nor elf before, nor goblin glared behind;
Nought gave prevention, access nought denied,
Save the grey trees, that, thickly intertwined,
His steps entangled oft, and oft his sight confined.

XXXVIII.

He reached at length a fair and spacious plot,
Shaped like a circus; in whose centre, waved
One single tree—a cypress, that upshot
Like a green pyramid to heaven, and braved
The winds with beauty; sweetest flowerets paved
The mossy floor: the prospect he perused,
Advanced, and saw, on the smooth rind engraved,
Symbols like those mysterious Egypt used,
Long ere her graphic art young Greece had introduced.

XXXIX.

Mid these dark types some Syriac words appeared,
A tongue to him familiar,—thus they ran:
"O thou, who in these aisles of death hast dared
To place thy glorying foot, audacious man!
Ah! if thou be not under pity's ban,
Cruel as bold, disquiet not, nor tread
This secret seat; but, if thy spirit can,
Pardon the hapless souls to darkness wed;
Why shouldst thou come to fight—the living with the dead!"

XL.

Thus spake the' inscription: whilst in pensive mood
He sought their mystic sense, he heard behind,
Amidst the leaves of the enchanted wood
And weeping boughs above, the serious wind
Frame a low melancholy dirge, that pined
Sadly harmonious, sounding in his ear
Like human sighs; a sound, that in his mind
Instilled I know not what confusedly dear
Of pity, pain divine, sweet grief, and sweeter fear.

XLI.

He drew his sword at length, and with full force
Struck the tall tree; oh, wonderful! the wound,
As bursts a fountain from its sylvan source,
Gushed forth with blood, and crimsoned all the ground.
Chill horror seized the knight: yet, fixed to sound
The mystery to its depth, and desperate grown,
Again he struck; when, hollow and profound,
As from a vaulted grave, in piteous tone,
Murmuring he heard within a spirit deeply moan.

XLII.

"Too much already, Tancred, has thy blade
Wronged me:" the sad voice feebly made exclaim;
"My late so happy home didst thou invade,
And rudely drive my spirit from the frame,
In and through which it lived: why wilt thou maim
Still the poor trunk to which my doom unblest
Binds me? can wrath so far the heart inflame,
Cruel! that in their shrouds thou must molest
Thy foes, when Death has sealed, and reverences their rest?

XLIII.

"I was Clorinda: nor does her sad sprite
Alone in heart of oak or cypress dwell;
But every other Frank or Pagan knight,
That before Salem in proud battle fell,
Is here by magic's most mysterious spell
Immanacled, I know not if to say
In vital body, or funereal cell;
With sense the trunks, with life the branches play;
And thou a murderer art, if thou one sapling slay."

XLIV.

As a sick man, that in his sleep perceives
Some fiery dragon or chimera grim;
Though he suspects, or firmly e'en believes
That the whole show is but a feverish dream,
Yet strives to fly, with many a shriek and scream,
Such fright the dire and horrid semblance breeds!
So, though the' enamoured knight cannot but deem
False the sad voice that for his pity pleads,
He yet the' illusion fears; and trembles, and recedes.

XLV.

At once pain, pity, love, fear, grief, surprise,
Rush o'er his heart; half frenzied and unmanned,
Cold on his brow the dew of horror lies,
And the sword falls from his relaxing hand:
He sees in thought his murdered lady stand
Weeping, imploring him with groans to spare
Her suffering tree, and sheathe his dreadful brand;
Nor can his harrowed fancy longer bear
To view her gushing blood, and hear her piteous prayer.

XLVI.

Thus he on whose brave heart no blind alarm
Of danger or of death could e'er intrude,
Powerless and soft alone at Love's deep charm,
A spirit false did with vain plaints delude:
Meanwhile a whirlwind, roaring from the wood,
Caught up his sword, and bore it out of ken
Through the dark grove; the warrior, thus subdued,
At length retired; and from the bosky glen
Issuing, his falchion found, and gladly grasped again.

XLVII.

Yet durst he not return, to pierce anew
Of these mysterious bowers the shadowy screen,
But as to Godfrey's presence near he drew,
Called back his spirits, and composed his mien;
Then thus addressed him: "Listen! I have seen
Things passing all belief; things which to you
Will sound like fables! of the forest green
The tales you have been told—the dreary view,
And loud appalling sounds, in every point are true.

XLVIII.

"First rose a wondrous fire, self-kindled, bright,
Rose in an instant, building high and wide
Towers, whereon, armed and shielded for the fight,
Whole hosts of monsters all access denied:
Yet these I passed, unharmed, unterrified
Or by the brandished blades, or volumed train
Of the fierce flames,—they vanished, when defied:
Night fell, winds roared, rain dashed; but straight again
Day smiled, the winds were hushed, and sunshine chased the rain.

XLIX.

"Yet more! with feeling, life, and speech endued,
A human spirit in each tree is shrined;
I heard one feebly wailing in the wood,
That wild, sad voice, still, still it haunts my mind:
Whilst, as though actual flesh the members lined
Of every hoary trunk and sapling spray,
Blood at each stroke ran trickling from the rind;
I own myself subdued, nor dare essay
Again the bark to strip, or rend one branch away."

L.

Whilst thus he speaks, a tide of tossing thought
Absorbs the soul of Godfrey; what if he
In his own person the enchantment sought,
And with his sceptre made those demons flee,
Which, as he judged, by power of sorcery
Possessed the forest! or should he provide
Elsewhere his timbers, which perchance might be,
If from a distance, with more ease supplied?
Him from this trance of thought the Hermit roused, and cried:

LI.

"Forego thy daring fancy: other hands
Must from yon forest cut the charmed trees;
Lo, on the far, the solitary sands
Grates the doomed bark, and gathers from the breeze
Her golden sails! from loose inglorious ease,
Love's siren chains, and zoneless Beauty's bribes,
The' expected Knight his captive spirit frees;
And soon will come the time which Heaven prescribes
For Sion's destined fall, despite her guardian tribes!"

LII.

He spake with voice seraphic; whilst his face
Shone with a light approaching to divine:
Godfrey to his prophetic words gave place,
And turned his thoughts, which never lie supine,
To other projects; but the radiant sign
Of Cancer now receives the sun, which foils
His schemes, and traverses each wise design:
Heat, unremitted heat the clime embroils,
And wearying, quite unfits his host for martial toils.

LIII.

The' Elysian Pleïads quench their friendly lamps;
In heaven's blue sphere swart planets tyrannise;
Whence streams an influence, that informs, and stamps
On air the' impression of their baleful dies;
More and more sultry grow the noxious skies;
Yet wide and wider sickness sheds its seeds;
More mortal heats descend, and vapours rise;
To torturing day more torturing night succeeds;
And still the next, and next, superior mischief breeds.

LIV.

The glimmering Sun ne'er issues from the deep,
But roseate mists his angry face enclose;
Ne'er sets, but tears of blood his eye-balls weep.—
Tears, of a tincture that too well foreshews
A melancholy morrow doomed to close
With the like drops, sweat from his sanguine veins;
Threatening to rise more fierce than last he rose,
And sharpening thus the sufferings each sustains,
With long foretasted griefs, and dread of future pains.

LV.

Then when at noon he darts his radiance down,
In compass far as mortal eye surveys,
The fair flowers languish, the green turf turns brown,
The leaves fall yellow from their sapless sprays;
Earth gapes in chinks; the' exhausted fountain plays
No more its music; shrunk the streams and lakes,
He subjects all things to his ardent rays;
The barren cloud, in air expanded, takes
Semblance of sheeted fire, and parts in scarlet flakes.

LVI.

Heaven seems a sable furnace: not a thing
Speaks freshness to the sight; the frolicsome
Sweet Zephyr, silent, waving not a wing,
His grotto keeps; mellifluous air is dumb.
Not a bird's fluttering, not an insect's hum
Breaks the still void; or on its sultry gloom
If winds intrude, 't is only such as come
From the hot sands, Sirocco or Simoom,
Which, blown in stifling gusts, the springs of life consume.

LVII.

Nor brings the Night more comfort: on her shade
The glowing Sun his radiant impress leaves;
With comets, lightnings, and the golden braid
Of other kindling fires her veil she weaves;
Thee too, sad Earth, the niggard Moon bereaves
Of her delightful dew-drops! not as erst
In amorous song her Druid minstrel grieves;
And all the wild-wood bells and blossoms thirst
For the moist juice which late their fragrant spirits nursed.

LVIII.

Through these unquiet nights, sweet Sleep, exiled,
Fled from the languid lids of weeping men;
Nor would by amorous courtship be beguiled,
Or flattering words, to spread his wings again:
But yet their worst of evils was the pain,
The rage of thirst; Judea's impious king
With secret herbs, and drugs of deadlier grain
Than Styx or sable Acheron could wring
From their malignant waves, had poisoned every spring.

LIX.

And Siloa's brook, that, gliding clear and swift,
Gave affluent beverage to the Franks before,
Has now no freshening virtue in its gift,
Scarce with warm waves o'erspreads its sandy floor.
Not the broad Po in May, when amplest pour
His floods, nor Ganges, which the Indian deems
A God, nor seven-mouthed Nile, when floating o'er
Green Egypt's boundless plains with even streams,
To their inflamed desires at all superfluous seems.

LX.

If any e'er 'twixt shady woods had seen
Cool glassy lakes in liquid silver sleep,
Quick fountains, bubbling up from mosses green,
Slide down smooth hills, brooks querulously creep
O'er lustrous stones, or Alpine torrents leap
Roaring from heaven, he paints them o'er and o'er
To his enamoured wish, sweet, icy, deep,
And, tasting them in fancy, tortures more
A heart already fired, tormented to its core.

LXI.

Warriors robust, whose frames of sturdiest mould
Not the long march through asperous regions rude,
Nor iron mails that aye their limbs enfold,
Nor weapons thirsting for their death, subdued,—
Tamed by the sultry heat, with sweat embrued,
Lie both a burden to themselves, and prey;
Faint, weak, dissolved in idlest lassitude,
A secret fire lives in their veins, whose ray
Eats by degrees their flesh, and melts their bones away.

LXII.

Sickens the late fierce steed; untasted, loathed,
Stands his once relished, once saluted corn;
The dancing mane and neck with thunder clothed,
But late superbly in the battle borne,
Droops to the ground; the pride of laurels worn
No more dilates his nostrils, swells his veins;
Glory his hatred, victory seems his scorn;
His rich caparisons, embroidered reins,
And sumptuous trophies, all—as baubles he disdains.

LXIII.

Sickens the faithful dog, and for his lord
And once beloved abode no longer cares;
Couchant he lies, by inward furies gnawed,
And, scorched, gapes momently for lighter airs;
But respiration, though it oft repairs
Nature's disorders, and corrects the fire
In feverish bosoms, charmed from healing, bears
Not now the cool refreshment they require;
So hot and stifling blow the breezes they inspire.

LXIV.

Thus languishes the earth; in this estate
The wretched troops lie sickening in their tents;
And, desperate grown of victory, meditate
What deadlier ills must crown these dire events:
On every side the spacious camp presents
Some dreadful scene; on every side the noise
Is heard of murmurs, weepings, and laments:
"What more hopes Godfrey?" cry they with one voice;
"Waits he till hasting death the total camp destroys?

LXV.

"Ah! with what forces does he hope to be
Lord of these towers? whence now his rams and vines
Can he expect? does he alone not see
Heaven's wrath revealed against our rash designs?
By thousand prodigies and thousand signs
To us its adverse spirit stands displayed;
Whilst on our heads the sun so hotly shines,
That not the Indian, or the Ethiop laid
On burning sands, more needs refreshment, showers, and shade!

LXVI.

"Thinks he it then a thing of no concern,
That we, a worthless and neglected train,
Vile, useless myrmidons, to death should burn,
That he his kingly sceptre may maintain?
And seems it then so great a bliss to reign,
That man should guard it at a price so high?
That he should seek his empire to retain
With soul so greedy, when, before his eye,
Of his own subjects thus such numbers faint or die?

LXVII.

"Mark the said pious Prince, his insight deep,
Humane to aid, prophetic to purvey!
Our good he quite forgets, so he can keep
His hurtful honour and vain-glorious sway:
He sees both streams and fountains waste away
From us, yet for himself cool waters sweet
Brings from far Jordan; and at banquets gay,
With a few Magnates, shaded from the heat,
Mingles the fresh clear wave with costly wines from Crete!"

LXVIII.

Thus the Franks murmured; but the Grecian guide,
Long weary of the war, aloud repined:
"And why should I or my brave troops," he cried,
"Stay to be stifled by the scorching wind?
If Godfrey will be so insanely blind,
Let him and his obsequious people look
To the result! are we to be combined
In their destruction?"—no farewell he took;
But in the silent night, silent the camp forsook.

LXIX.

This base desertion with the morning star
Was clearly seen, and wide the' infection spread;
Those who the pastoral voice of Ademar
Lately obeyed, the troops Clotharius led,
And other chiefs now numbered with the dead,
Freed from their oaths of duty by the Power
That of all human ties dissolves the thread,
Already treat of flight; and some, the flower
Thereof, at once depart, at midnight's shadowy hour.

LXX.

This Godfrey saw, and had been swift to take
Judgment's just dues, but such his soul abhorred;
And, full of living faith, faith which can make
Hills move, and floods stand steadfast, he implored
In deep devotion earth's almighty Lord,
That he his ancient mercies would reveal,
And shed the fountains of his grace abroad;
His hands he clasped, and, full of sacred zeal,
Thus, with eyes raised to Heaven, to Heaven he made appeal.

LXXI.

"Father and Lord; if in a thirsty land
Thou on thy hosts e'er rained ambrosial dew,
E'er with thy power endued a mortal hand,
To smite the flinty rocks, till, cleft in two,
They gushed with living streams, oh now renew
On these the like sure mercies! and if we
Seem less deserving in thy holy view,
Thy grace that want supply! that all may see
They are thy warriors still, and called, O Lord, by thee!"

LXXII.

These prayers sincere, derived from a desire
Upright and humble, were not slow, but light
And swift as winged turtles, to the Sire
Of men and seraphs took their instant flight:
The' Eternal heard, and from his holy height,
On his faint hosts, as o'er his suffering child
A sympathising parent, cast his sight,
In looks where pity beamed, where mercy smiled,
And thus in gracious words, benevolent and mild:

LXXIII.

"Till now these dear and faithful hosts of mine
Have suffered peril, pain, fatigue, and woe;
'Gainst them, with arms and secret arts malign,
The world around and powers of hell below
Have both conspired to work their overthrow;
Now a new series of events shall run;
Smooth to the end shall their adventure flow:
Let rains descend, return Bertoldo's son,
And Egypt's hosts arrive, to grace his laurels won!"

LXXIV.

He bowed his head: the heavens with all their hosts,
The fixed, the wandering stars in their bright stations,
Shook at the sign; shook hills, and seas, and coasts,
And Orcus trembled to its deep foundations.
Instant from north to east swift coruscations
Flashed through the skies, and with a golden sound
Rolled the clear thunder; with glad shouts the nations
Hail the bright shining, hail the roll profound,
And wonder, hope, and joy in every heart abound.

LXXV.

Lo! sudden clouds, not those exhaled from earth
By the sun's rays, but from the heavens—that rend,
And all their secret springs unlock, take birth,
Collect, combine, and fast to earth descend:
The glooms of night, ere noon is at an end,
Surprise the day; and, spreading quickly o'er
The' encompassed world, all things in shadow blend;
Then swell the winds, the rains impetuous pour,
And, o'er their banks escaped, the brooks and fountains roar.

LXXVI.

As in the burning heats of summer, when
At length the long-wished rains of heaven descend,
A flight of babbling wild-ducks in the fen,
With hoarse glad cries the coming shower attend;
Spread their dry wings to the cool moisture, bend
Their grey necks back to wet the thirsty bill,
And proyne their plumes, and as the waters blend
Into a pool, hoarse-chattering, clamouring still,
Rush, duck, and flounce, and dive, and quaff the waves at will;—

LXXVII.

So they with glad huzzas the showers salute,
Which Heaven, in answer to their Chief's request,
Pours down in bounty; not a voice is mute;
This one his tresses, that one soaks his vest:
From glasses some, some from their helms with zest
Quench their deep thirst; in the fresh wave profuse
Some lave their faces, some their brows; the rest,
More prudent, vases, urns, and ewers produce,
And the mellifluous streams store up for future use.

LXXVIII.

Nor is the drooping spirit of mankind
Alone rejoiced and eased of all its pains;
But Earth, of late afflicted, scorched, and pined,
A like refreshment and repose obtains:
Her chinks by virtue of the falling rains
Are closed, renewed her vegetative powers;
And the rich moisture through her inmost veins
Received, she ministers in plenteous showers,
To her reviving shrubs, and freshly-smelling flowers.

LXXIX.

As a sick maid, when sprightly balms appease
The fever, late that scorched her life away,
Now disencumbered of the long disease
That made her beauty its repast and prey,
Strengthens, revives, and flourishes as gay
As when her cheek with brightest roses bloomed,—
So Earth, forgetful of her late decay,
The griefs and ills that had her strength consumed,
Joyful her flowery crowns and garlands green resumed.

LXXX.

The rains are o'er, the sun returning glows,
But with a sweet, benign, and temperate ray,
Yet full of virtual power, as at the close
Of showery April or the birth of May.
O Faith divine! the Good and Just who pray
In thy devoted strength, can dissipate
Infectious airs, malignant heats allay,
The series of the seasons change, abate
The rage of angry stars, and vanquish Time and Fate!

CANTO XIV.

Stanza lx.

ARGUMENT.

GODFREY, in vision rapt to Paradise,
Is warned of God to call back to the host
The good Rinaldo, wherefore he replies,
When his recal the Princes have proposed,
With favour; Peter, whom the Holy Ghost
Had previously instructed, now prepares
To send two knights where on the nigh sea-coast
A courteous wizard lives, who first declares
To them Armide's deceits, then how to scape her snares.

I.

Now from the fresh soft lap and twilight bower
Of her still mother flew the gentle Queen
Of Shade, with light airs compassed, and a shower
Of starlight dews, pure, precious, and serene:
And, shaking o'er the universal scene
The humid border of her veil, impearled
With honey-balm the flowers and forests green;
Whilst the sweet zephyrs their still wings unfurled,
And fanned to dulcet sleep and peace the o'erwearied world.

II.

Each busy thought of rude disturbing day
In sweet oblivious quietude was drowned;
But He, whose wisdom heaven and earth doth sway
Yet kept his ruling watch, insphered and crowned
With ceaseless light; and from heaven's starry round
Casting on Godfrey the ecstatic beam
Of his mild eye, to him in sleep profound,
By silent precept of a missioned dream,
Of his Almighty Mind revealed the will supreme.

III.

In the rich Orient, near the valves of gold
Whence the sun sallies, turns a crystalline
Clear gate, whose doors in harmony unfold,
Ere pale the planets and the day-beams shine:
'T is thence the glorious dreams which the Divine
In grace to pure and holy spirits sends,
Issuing fly forth; from that pictorial shrine
This dream to pious Godfrey now descends,
And o'er his placid face its radiant wings extends.

IV.

Nor dream nor gifted vision e'er portrayed
Such beautiful or lively forms, as here
To Godfrey's fancy this, which now displayed
Of heaven and of its stars the secrets clear;
As in the mirror of a glassy sphere,
All was at once presented to his sight
That in them is; he seemed, in swift career,
Caught up to an expanse of perfect white,
Adorned with thousand flames that gave a golden light.

V.

Here, as the moving spheres, the vast blue sky,
The lights, and the rich music he admires,
Lo, to his side a winged knight draws nigh,
With sunbeams crowned, and circumfused with fires!
And in a voice to which the clearest choirs
And perfect marriage of sweet sounds below
Breathed out from beauteous lips or golden wires,
Would be but discord, said: "Canst thou bestow
No smile, or dost thou not thy once loved Hugo know?"

VI.

To which the Duke replied: "That aspect new,
Which like the glowing sun so brightly shines,
Has dazzled so mine intellectual view
That it can ill recal its ancient lines:"
And saying this, to greet him he inclines;
Thrice with a fond affectionate embrace
Around his neck his loving arms he twines;
And thrice the' encircled form and radiant face
Fly like a summer cloud, or shade the sunbeams chase.

VII.

Prince Hugo smiled; "And think not, as of old,"
He said, "that earthly robes my limbs invest;
My naked spirit here dost thou behold,
A simple shape; I dwell, a glorious guest,
In this the' illumined City of the Blest:
This is the temple of our God, the' abode
Of his true knights; and here thou too shall rest:"
"Ah, when?" he cried; "if aught in me this mode
Of bliss obstruct, loose now, O loose the' encumbering load!"

VIII.

"Soon!" replied Hugo; "soon in glory thou
Shalt gathered be to our triumphant band;
But many a laurel first must grace thy brow,
Much blood be shed by thy victorious hand;
The Pagan armies yet thou must withstand,
And from their grasp by many a toilsome deed
Wresting the sceptre of the Holy Land,
Fix the Frank empire; then it is decreed,
That to thy gentle rule thy brother shall succeed.

IX.

"But now look round more fixedly; behold—
To quicken for the skies thy pure desires,
These lucid halls and starry orbs of gold,
Which, whirling round, the' Eternal Mind inspires!
Observe the beauty of those siren choirs
Of seraphs; hear the' angelical sweet strains,
In concord sung to their celestial lyres;
Next view," he said, and pointed to the plains
Of earth, below, "what yon terrestrial globe contains.

X.

"Think of your earthly titles and designs;
With what a vile reward is virtue crowned!
Mark what a little ring your pride confines,
What naked deserts your vain glories bound!
Earth like an island the blue sea flows round,
Now, called the Mighty Deep from coast to coast,
Now, the vast Ocean; to that pompous sound
Nought corresponds, to authorise such a boast—
'T is but a shallow pool, a narrow marsh at most."

XI.

The Spirit said: and he his sight let fall
On earth, and smiled with a serene disdain;
Shrunk to a point, seas, streams, and mountains tall
He sees, remote, but here distinguished plain;
And much he wondered that weak man should strain
At shades and mists that swim before his eyes,
And chase those radiant bubbles of the brain—
Capricious Fame, and Power, that, followed, flies,
Nor heed the' inviting voice that calls him to the skies.

XII.

Wherefore he answered: "Since not yet thy God
Is pleased to call me from this cage of clay,
Which path of life is safest to be trod
Mid Earth's erroneous windings, deign to say."
Hugo replied: "The least fallacious way
To happiness, indeed the' alone sure track,
Is that thou walkest; turn not then astray;
Alone I would advise thee, be not slack
From his far exile now to call Rinaldo back.

XIII.

"For, as by Providence divine to thee
The golden sceptre, the supreme command
Of that adventure is consigned, so he
As sovereign agent of thy schemes, must stand
Assistant to the task: the first and grand
Office is thine; the second the Most High
Concedes to him; he is the army's hand,
And thou the head,—none other can supply
His place, not e'en thyself, thy state does this deny.

XIV.

"He, he alone has license to cut down
The forest guarded by such magic art;
From him thy troops, despairing of the town
From the deserters they have seen depart,
On flight themselves debating, shall take heart,
And, nerved with livelier strength by the mere sight
Of one so valiant, fresh for conquest start;
The bulwarks he shall shatter, scale their height,
And the vast Memphian hosts o'erpower in mortal fight."

XV.

He ceased, and Godfrey answered; "His return
Would be most grateful to my feelings; thou,
Who every secret purpose dost discern,
Know'st if I love him, as I here avow:
But say, what offers must I make him? how
Soothe his vext spirit? where my heralds send?
Wilt thou that I for his recal allow
Courtship, or use command? declare, blest friend,
How I to make this suit may fitly condescend."

XVI.

"God"—in reply the' angelic spirit said,
"Who with such high regards thy rank has graced,
Wills, that to thee all reverence yet be paid
By those who under thy command are placed;
Shew thou not then facility nor haste;
Make no request; for, haply, this would lead
To scorn, and thus thy dignity, debased,
Might fall into contempt; but asked, concede
And yield, when first thy knights shall for forgiveness plead.

XVII.

"Guelph shall petition thee (by God inspired)
To' absolve the headstrong youth of that offence
To which intemperate wrath his spirit fired,
That he to honour may return; dispense
Thy grace; and though in loosest indolence
And love intoxicate, he now reclines
On a far foreign shore, doubt not but thence
He will return, ere many a morning shines,
Apt for thy pressing needs and difficult designs.

XVIII.

"Your Hermit Peter, to whose piercing sight
Heaven of its secrets gives perception clear,
Shall thy sent messengers direct aright,
Where certain tidings they of him shall hear;
The sage to whose abode their ship must steer,
Will shew the arts and methods they must use
To free, and home conduct the wandering peer;
Thus Heaven at length shall, partial to thy views,
Beneath the sacred Cross each errant chief reduce.

XIX.

"Farewell! yet ere I end, hear one brief thing,
Which will, I know, delight thy noble mind;
Your blood shall mix, and from that union spring
A glorious issue, dear to all mankind!"[9]
He said; and like a cloud before the wind,
Or azure mist upon the mountain's crest
By the hot shining of the sun refined,
Vanished away; sleep fled, and left his breast
With wonder and deep joy confusedly possessed.

XX.

His eyes he opes, and sees the Orient blaze
With the high-risen Aurora; from repose
He starts, in iron robes his limbs arrays,
And o'er his back the purple mantle throws
Then takes his seat; for, soon as morning glows,
To his pavilion throng the knights of state,
In customary council to expose
Their sentiments, and of the war debate;
Thither they all were met, and round in silence sate.

XXI.

Then Guelph arose, full of the new design
Which had his mind inspired, and drawing near,
To Godfrey thus made suit; "O, Prince benign,
What I propose receive with favouring ear!
I come to ask, with all thy nobles here,
Grace for a crime, and, if it must be said,
A crime yet recent; whence it may appear,
Perchance, that my request is hasty made,
In an untimely hour, ere yet maturely weighed.

[9] Tasso in these verses makes allusion to the marriage of Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, with Anne of Este.

XXII.

"But when I think that to a Prince so mild
My suit is proffered, and for whose brave sake,
That, too, the intercessor is not vilde
Nor mean of rank, I cannot choose but take
The prayer for granted, which will surely make
All happy, and obtain deserved applause;
Recal Rinaldo! I my honour stake
That he his blood will, in the common cause,
Shed to redeem his fault, and satisfy the laws.

XXIII.

"What daring hand but his those haunted bowers,
So feared, shall e'er successfully assail?
Who, of a firmer heart, more vigorous powers,
May hope the risks of death to countervail?
Thou shalt behold him o'er yon towers prevail,
Shatter the wall, beat down the brazen door,
And singly, before all, the rampart scale:
Restore him to the camp, kind Sire, restore!
Its hope, its heart, its hand! by Jesu I implore!

XXIV.

"To me a nephew, to thyself restore
An agent, prompt for each sublime attack;
Leave him not sunk in slumber, I implore,—
To glory, to himself, invite him back;
Let him but follow the triumphal track
Of thy blest flag, the world shall witness be
Of his improvement: he shall not be slack
To do illustrious deeds, beholding thee,
Ranked beneath thy command, fulfilling thy decree!"

XXV.

Thus sued the high-born Guelpho, and the rest
With partial murmurs the request improved;
Godfrey, as though revolving in his breast
A thing before unthought of, as behoved,
Paused, and made answer: "Can I but be moved
To grace and mercy, when you all are bent
To press me? your petition stands approved;
Let rigour yield—what you with one consent
Desire, shall be my law: I yield, and am content.

XXVI.

"Let the brave youth return, but let him rein
Henceforth his rage more wisely; and take heed,
That the high hopes our armies entertain
Of his maturing years, be matched indeed
By equal actions; now, my lord, proceed—
'T is fit the wanderer be recalled by thee;
Return he will, I trust, with willing speed;
Choose then the messengers, and o'er the sea
Or sands direct them where you judge the knight to be."

XXVII.

He ceased, and thus the warrior Dane: "I pray
To be the man commissioned; I shall slight
All danger, doubt, or distance of the way,
So I may give this sword to whom of right
It henceforth must belong:" the Danish knight
Was resolute of heart, and brave of hand;
The offer thus gave Guelpho much delight:
"Thy wish," said he, "is mine; and with thee, bland
Ubaldo, sage and sure, the mission will demand."

XXVIII.

Ubald in early lifetime had surveyed
Much of the world, in various realms had been;
From frozen zones to where palmettos shade
The sultry Ethiop, had most nations seen;
Their rites observed, and with perception keen
Learned, at whatever port his bark might touch,
To imitate the language, mode, and mien
Of the rude native; thus, his parts were such,
That, in his court retained, Lord Guelpho loved him much.

XXIX.

These were the knights appointed to recal
The noble fugitive; and Guelph ordained
That they should shape their journey to the hall
Where Bohemond in kingly splendour reigned;
For that the warrior there was entertained,
By public fame had through the host been spread,
And as a certain fact was still maintained:
The Hermit, knowing they were much misled,
Amidst them entered now, and interposing said:—

XXX.

"In following, Signior, the fallacious breath
Of public rumour, you pursue a guide
Headstrong and treacherous, which, if not to death,
From the right path will lead your steps aside:
No! give your pinnace o'er the sea to glide;
To Ascalon's near shores your sails commend;
Where a swift stream rebuts the salt sea-tide,
A hermit you will meet, my trusty friend,
Of your intent forewarned—to all his words attend.

XXXI.

"Much from the foresight of his own clear mind,
Much of your voyage has he learned from me;
Wise as he is, the Senior you will find
As much distinguished for his courtesy,
His affable discourse and manners free."
Instructed thus, no more did Charles inquire,
Nor Ubald more; but, as a fixt decree,
Obeyed those accents, which celestial fire
Was, as they surely knew, accustomed to inspire.

XXXII.

They bid adieu; impatience spurs them on—
Without delay they launch, and drive before
The willing wind direct for Ascalon,
Where the blue ocean breaks against the shore:
Scarce had they caught the hoarse and hollow roar
Of breakers on the coast than they beheld
The' anticipated stream its waters pour
Into the sea, by recent torrents swelled,
And o'er its rocky banks with headlong force impelled.

XXXIII.

High o'er its banks the unrestricted flood,
Swift as a flying shaft, its waters rolled:
Whilst in confusion and suspense they stood,
A Sire appeared, right venerably old,
Crowned with beech-leaves; long robes his limbs enfold
Of whitest grain—he shook a charming rod—
The surge grew calm; and, curious to behold,
With unwet feet, in only sandals shod,
He on the waters walked, and toward the vessel trod.

XXXIV.

As o'er the Rhine when winter its broad tide
Has in smooth chains of solid silver bound,
The village girls in crowds securely glide,
With long swift strokes, in many a playful round;
So on these orient waves, though neither sound
Nor crystallised to ice, this ancient man
Walked to the deck on which in awe profound
The knights stood fixt, stood stupified to scan
This singular, strange sight; he came, and thus began:

XXXV.

"Oh friends, a perilous and painful quest
You urge, and much in need of guidance stand!
The knight you seek, far in the golden West
Lies on a wild, unknown, and Gentile strand:
Much, oh how much for you remains on hand
To dare and do! what coasts must you not clear,
What spacious seas, and what long tracts of land!
Beyond the limits of our eastern sphere,
You must your search extend, your winged pinnace steer!

XXXVI.

"Yet scorn not first to view the hidden cell
Which I my secret hermitage have made:
Momentous things you there shall hear me tell,
Most requisite for you to know;"—he said,
And made the waves yield passage; they obeyed—
Murmuring sweet music, they receded swift;
And, here and there dividing, high o'erhead
Hung curling, like some proud and beetling clift,
That o'er the mining deep is seen its brows to lift.

XXXVII.

He took them by the hand and led them down
The river's depth beneath the roaring main,
By such pale light, as through some forest brown
Streams from the yellow moon, when in her wane;
They see the spacious caverns that contain
The weight of waters which above-ground break
So freely forth; that in one lucid vein
Burst in clear springs, or, more expansive, make
The broad smooth-sliding stream, slight pool, or sheeted lake.

XXXVIII.

The cisterns there whence Ganges takes his course,
Po, and renowned Hydaspes, strike their eye;
Don, Eúphrates, and Tanais; nor its source
Mysterious does the Nile to them deny;
More deep, a river flowing brightly by
O'er beds of living sulphur they behold,
Brimmed with quicksilver; these the sun on high
Ripens, refines, and in their secret mould
Binds in resplendent veins of silver, zinc, or gold.

XXXIX.

And the rich flood did all its banks instar
With precious stones, enchanting to the sight;
Which, like bright lamps, illumined wide and far
The den's black gloom with luxury of light:
There, in blue lustre, shone the sapphire bright,
Heaven's native tint; the jacinth glistered mild;
Flamed the fine ruby, flashed the diamond white,
In virgin state, on sparkling opals piled,
And, gay with cheerful green, the lovely emerald smiled.

XL.

In dumb amazement the two warriors passed,
And all their thoughts to these strange scenes applied!
Said not a word! Ubaldo spake at last,
And thus in faltering speech addressed his guide:
"O Father, say where now we are! this tide—
Where does it flow? thine own estate explain;
Do I behold aright? or is this pride
And prodigality of wealth a vain
Illusion? scarcé I know, such wonder wraps my brain."

XLI.

"You," he replied, "are in the spacious womb
Of earth, the general mother! not e'en ye
Could ever thus have pierced into the gloom
Of her rich bowels, unless brought by me:
I lead you to my home, which you will see
Illumed with curious light, a splendid place—
I was by birth a Pagan; but, set free
From Pagan sin, regenerate grown by grace,
I was baptised, and now Christ's holy rule embrace.

XLII.

"Think not my magic wonders wrought by aid
Of Stygian angels summoned up from hell;
Scorned and accurst be those who have essayed
Her gloomy Dives and Afrits to compel[10]
By fumes or voices, talisman or spell!—
But by perception of the secret powers
Of mineral springs, in nature's inmost cell,
Of herbs, in curtain of her greenwood bowers,
And of the moving stars, on mountain-tops and towers.

XLIII.

"For in these caves mid glooms and shadows brown,
Far from the sun, not always I abide;
But oft on sacred Carmel's flowery crown,
And oft on odorous Lebanon reside;
There without veil I see the planets glide;
Notice each aspect; chronicle each phase
Of Mars and Venus; every star beside,
That, swift or slow, of kind or froward rays,
Revolves and shines in heaven, is naked to my gaze.

XLIV.

"Beneath my feet I view, or rare or dense,
The clouds, now dark, now beautiful in show;
Of rains and dews the generation; whence,
Thwart or direct, the winds and tempests blow;
How lightnings kindle, why they dart below
In orb'd or writhen rays; so near I scan
The fireball, comet, and the showery bow
Wove in Heaven's loom, that I at length began,
Puffed up with pride, myself to fancy more than man.

XLV.

"So overweening of myself, that now
I thought my powers could compass or command
Knowledge of all above, around, below,
That sprang to birth from God's creative hand!
But when your Hermit, visiting this strand,
From sin my soul, from error purged my mind,
He taught my thoughts to soar, my views to expand,
And I perceived how little and confined
They of themselves had been, how vain, how weak, how blind!

[10] In deference to critical opinion, I have altered all other allusions to the Mahometan Mythology.

XLVI.

"I saw how, like night-owls at rise of sun,
Our minds with Truth's first rays are stupified;
Smiled at the futile webs my folly spun;
Scorned my vain-glory, and renounced my pride;
But still my genius, as he wished, applied
To the deep arts and philosophic quest
In which I joyed before, but, purified
And changed from what I was, with nobler zest;
Ruled by the Seer on whom implicitly I rest;—

XLVII.

"My guide and lord! what his sagacious wit
Points out, I execute; he not disdains
Now to my poor direction to commit
Works that might grace himself—from servile chains
To free the' unconquered knight whom sloth detains
By strong enchantment in a witch's hold,
Where amorous Revel high misrule maintains;
Long for your coming have I looked, of old
By the prophetic Seer in signs to me foretold."

XLVIII.

Whilst with this tale the knights he entertained,
They reached his dwelling: large it was and fair;
Shaped like a grot, and in itself contained
Galleries, and rooms, and spacious halls; whate'er
Of wild or precious, beautiful or rare,
Earth breeds in her rich veins, shone forth to view;
Nor one romantic ornament was there,
That from arranging art its glory drew,
But, formed in Nature's freaks, in native wildness grew.

XLIX.

Nor failed there pages, numberless, untold,
To serve the guests with ready active haste;
Nor failed there urns of crystal, pearl, and gold,
On stands magnificent of silver placed,
Heaped high with whatsoe'er might please the taste
And when with meats and wines their appetite
Was satisfied, rich fruits the table graced;
And the sage spoke; "'Tis time that I invite
To what will be, methinks, of more refined delight.

L.

"Armida's deeds, her purposes, her guile,
And secret snares in part to you are known;
How to your camp she came, and by what wile
She charmed and led your warriors to her lone
Enchanted fortress; how they then were thrown
By their false hostess into chains, and lay
Long time, their amorous follies to atone;
Till, sent with thousand guards to Gaza, they
Were by Rinaldo freed;—mark well what now I say.

LI.

"Things yet unknown to you do I declare,
Strange, but most true: when the fair witch perceived
That the rich prey it took such toil to snare,
Was rescued from her grasp, she stormed, she grieved;
Stamped, and in anger scarce to be conceived,
That her designs should be so clearly crost,
Burst forth; 'Let not the wretch be so deceived,
As to suppose the prisoners I have lost,
Are to be repossessed without revenge or cost!

LII.

"'If he has set them free, he in their place
Shall suffer lingering misery, hopeless thrall:
Nor shall this serve; the dues of my disgrace
Shall on the whole curst camp in vengeance fall!
And, raving thus, she in her heart of gall
Framed what I now disclose to you, a sleight
The most malignant and refined of all;
She came where young Rinaldo had in fight
Her warriors late subdued, or massacred outright.

LIII.

"Rinaldo there had thrown his arms aside,
And in a Turkish suit himself disguised;
Thinking perchance that he should safer ride,
In an array less known and signalised:
The' Enchantress came; his arms she recognised;
A headless figure in them cased, and threw
Upon a brook's green banks, where she surmised,
It would be sure to meet the Christians' view,
When to the shaded stream for waters fresh they drew.

LIV.

"Nor was their coming hard to be foreseen;
For she a thousand spies on all sides sent,
Who every day brought tidings to their queen
Of the far Camp, who came, returned, or went;
Oft too her dexterous spirits would present,
After long talk with them in hall or grot,
Familiar picturings of each fresh event;
And thus the corse she cast in such a spot,
As best subserved her aim, and deep insidious plot.

LV.

"Near, the most shrewd of her deceitful train
She slily placed, in shepherd's weeds arrayed;
And, what he was to do, to say, to feign,
Taught in all points, and was in all obeyed;
He, seized whilst hurrying from the forest shade,
Spoke with your soldiers, and amongst them sowed
Seeds of suspicion; which, maturing, swayed
The Camp to discord, till rebellion showed
Fearless her face abroad, and fires intestine glowed.

LVI.

"For as she planned, all thought Rinaldo dead,
By Godfrey slain, his error to atone;
Albeit indeed their vague suspicions fled,
When the first beams of truth prevailing shone:
Thus with a craft peculiarly her own,
Armida wove her wiles; the second well
Chimed with the first, as will be seen anon;
The sequel of her scheme I now shall tell,
How she Rinaldo chased, and what from thence befel.

LVII.

"O'er hill and dale Armida watched the youth,
Till now his steps the swift Orontes stayed,
Where the clear stream its waters parting smooth,
Soon to rejoin, a flowery island made:
Here on the banks, under the greenwood shade,
A sculptured column might the Prince behold,
Near which a little shallop floating played;
The marble white, its workmanship and mould,
As he admired, he read in words engraved of gold:—

LVIII.

"'Oh thou, whoe'er thou art, whom sweet self-will,
Or chance, or idlesse to this region guides!
No greater wonder in design or skill
Can the world shew, than that this islet hides;
Pass o'er and see!' Enticed he soon divides
The boat's gilt chain, and, so divinely smile
Those summer waters, o'er them tilting rides;
But as the skiff was slight, he leaves the while
His knights ashore, and seeks alone the' inviting isle.

LIX.

"Landing, he looks around; yet nothing sees
To claim his curious sight but waters sheen,
Rocks, mossy grots, dells, fountains, flowers, and trees,
So that he deems his fancy to have been
Mocked by the marble; yet the place, the scene,
Were such as might enchant the rudest minds;
So down he sits on banks of pleasant green,
Disarms his face, and sweet refreshment finds
In the cool fanning breath of odoriferous winds.

LX.

"Meanwhile the river gurgles with a sound
New to his ear, and thither calls his sight;
One placid billow in the midst whirled round,
And sudden sank, then rose to greater height;
From which peeped forth, with golden tresses bright,
A virgin's beauteous face—her neck—her breast—
Then her two lily paps of purest white,
Their budded nipples rosily expressed;—
Whilst whispering billows flung their silver round the rest.

LXI.

"So on the midnight stage some water-maid,
Or fairy queen, slow rises from the floor;
And though no Siren, but a painted shade,
Yet all the fascinating grace she bore
Of those same treacherous Sisters, that of yore
Haunted the smooth sunshiny waters nigh
The Tuscan coast; as bright a bloom she wore;
As musical her voice, her smile as shy;
And thus aloud she sang, enchanting air and sky.

LXII.

"'Oh happy youths, whom Spring with roses sweet
Robes and adorns! let not false glory's ray,
Nor virtue's smooth insidious beauty cheat
Your tender minds, and lead your steps astray;
Who crops the lily ere it fades away,
Who follows pleasure, he alone is sage!
Press then the purple grape of life—be gay—
This Nature bids; and will you warfare wage
With her divine decrees, nor fear the frowns of age?

LXIII.

"'Fools! to fling from you, without taste or care,
The brief enjoyments of your passing prime;
Names without object, idols all of air,
Are the vain toys to which you warriors climb:
The fame which charms with such a golden chime
Proud heroes' hearts, the glories that persuade,
Are but an echo in the ear of Time,—
A dream, a shade, the shadow of a shade;
With the bright rainbow born, they swift as rainbows fade.

LXIV.

"'But let your tranquil souls with all sweet things
Your happy senses cheer, whilst fresh and fair;
Past woes forget: nor with the anxious wings
Of expectation speed the steps of care:
Heed not if thunders roll, or lightnings glare;
Let the storm threaten as it will, rejoice!
With languor rest, with rest enjoyment share;
This is Elysium, this true Wisdom's choice,
This Nature's self requires,—slight not her charming voice!'

LXV.

"So sings the Phantom, and her soft sweet tune
To settling sleep allures his heavy eyes;
Sense after sense dissolves in gentle swoon;
From limb to limb lethargic sweetness flies;
Till he of death the passive picture lies,
Nor e'en the bellowing thunder now could break
The magic trance: when this Armida spies,
She, issuing swift and silent as the snake,
From her close ambush runs, her sworn revenge to take.

LXVI.

"But on his face when she had gazed awhile,
And saw how placidly he breathed, how sweet
A light seemed e'en in his closed eyes to smile,
(Ah, were they open, what were her conceit!)
She paused in doubt, and near him took her seat;
The more she gazed, the more fond pity sprung
To her stern heart; till, of all angry heat
Charmed, o'er the boy, those greens and flowers among,
With loving, lovely eyes, Narcissus-like she hung.

LXVII.

"The living heat-dews that impearled his face,
She with her veil wiped tenderly away;
And, to cool more the fervours of the place,
Her turban took, and fanned him as he lay;
And called the mild winds of the west to play
Round the rich cheeks that so divinely glow;
Mark but the change! Love's intellectual ray
Has from her savage bosom thawed the snow,
And to the kindest friend transformed the sternest foe.

LXVIII.

"With bluebells, lilies, woodbines, and wild roses,
That flowered in thousands through those pleasant plains,
She next with admirable skill composes
Garlands, festoons, and odoriferous chains,
Which round his neck, and arms, and feet she strains
Tightly yet tenderly; and o'er his eyes
Whilst sleep her shadowy government maintains,
Bears upon tiptoe the imprisoned prize
To her enchanted car, and, mounting, cuts the skies.

LXIX.

"Not now to rich Damascus does she fly,
Nor where her castle crests the' Asphaltine tide;
But, jealous of a pledge so dear, and shy
Of her new passion, betwixt shame and pride,
In the Atlantic sea resolves to hide,
Where rarely mortal oar was known to comb,
Or ne'er, green Neptune's curling waves; there, wide
Of all mankind, she singles for her home
A little isle, round which the billows loneliest foam.

LXX.

"One of a cluster to which Fortune lends
Her name, the' Elysian fields of old renown;
There she a mountain's lofty peak ascends,
Unpeopled, shady, shagged with forests brown;
Whose sides, by power of magic, half way down
She heaps with slippery ice, and frost, and snow,
But sunshiny and verdant leaves the crown
With orange woods and myrtles—speaks—and lo!
Rich from the bordering lake a palace rises slow.

LXXI.

"Here in perpetual May her virgin sweets
She yields him, lapt in amorous wild delight;
From that far palace, from those secret seats,
Your task must be to disenthral the knight;
To brave, encounter with, and put to flight
The guards her timorous jealousy has set
To keep the marble hall and shaded height;
Nor shall you need or guide or gondolet,
Nor added arms divine, the' adventure to abet.

LXXII.

"A damsel, old in years, though young in show,
When from the stream we issue, you will find,
With long rich tresses curling round her brow,
And garments beauteous as the bird of Ind;
She, through the ocean, swifter than the wind
Or wing of eagles, shall direct your track,
And leave the lightning in her flight behind;
Nor will you find her as a guide less slack,
Or less secure of trust, to speed you safely back.

LXXIII.

"At the hill's foot whereon the Sorceress reigns,
Bulls bellow, hydras roar, and serpents hiss,
Revengeful lions rear their frightful manes,
And bears and panthers ope the grim abyss
Of their devouring jaws; shake then but this
My fascinating wand, and at the sound
They will recede, or crouch your feet to kiss:
But on the summit of that guarded ground
More fearful perils lurk—and subtler charms abound.

LXXIV.

"For there a fountain plays, whose dancing, pure,
And smiling rills the gazer's thirst excite,
Yet the cool crystals but to harm allure,—
Strange poison lurks within its waves of light;
One little draught the soul inebriates quite,
Mounts to the brain, and to the wit supplies
A host of gay ideas; till delight
Starts into voice, shrill peals of laughter rise,
Mirth overpowers the man, he laughs, and laughing dies.

LXXV.

"Turn then, oh turn your lips away with dread;
Scorn the false wave that to such ills persuades;
Be not allured by wines or viands spread
By fountain sides, or under green arcades;
Let no fond gestures of lascivious maids—
The smile that flatters, or the tune that calls
To amorous blandishments in myrtle shades,
Move the fine pulse; each glance, each word that falls
Leave for the ivory gates, and tread the' interior halls.

LXXVI.

"Within, a maze of circling corridors
Verge and diverge a thousand winding ways;
But of its various galleries, walks and doors,
A lucid plan this little chart displays
To guide your steps: in centre of the maze,
A spacious garden flings its fragrance round,
Where not a light leaf shakes, or zephyr strays,
But breathes out love; here, on the fresh green ground,
In his fair lady's lap the warrior will be found.

LXXVII.

"But when the' Enchantress quits her darling's side,
And elsewhere turns her footsteps from the place,
Then, with the diamond shield which I provide,
Step forth, and so present it for a space,
That he may start at his reflected face,
His wanton weeds and ornaments survey;
The sight whereof, and sense of his disgrace,
Shall make him blush, and without vain delay
From his unworthy love indignant break away.

11 Pomponius Mela speaks of such a fountain as existing in the Fortunate Islands.—Lib. iii. cap. 10.

LXXVIII.

"Enough! it were superfluous to say more,
Than that to morrow you may hence proceed;
And when your pleasant voyage ends, explore
The secret paths that to the lovers lead,
With safe success and all convenient speed;
For neither shall the powers of sorcery
Your voyage hinder or your plans impede;
Nor (so superior will your guidance be,)
Shall the fair witch have skill your coming to foresee.

LXXIX.

"Nor less securely from her fairy halls
Shall you depart and wend your homeward way;
But now the midnight hour to slumber calls,
And we must be abroad by break of day."
This said, he rose; and, ushering them the way,
His wondering guests to their apartments brought;
And leaving them to slumber's peaceful sway,
In reveries of glad and solemn thought,
His own nocturnal couch the good old Hermit sought.

CANTO XV.

Stanza xlix.

ARGUMENT.

The Seer's instructions the two knights pursue
They reach the ready ship that rides in port,
Embark, set sail, and in the distance view
The fleet and army of the' Egyptian court.
Propitious winds within the canvass sport,
Fast bounds the vessel to the pilot's hand
O'er the blue ocean, making long seem short;
On a lone isle remote at last they land,
And every tempting sound and spectacle withstand.

I.

Scarce had Aurora ris'n with grateful ray,
Or Syrian shepherd led his flocks from fold,
Than the Sage, coming where the warriors lay,
Produced the chart, the shield, and wand of gold;
And "Rise!" he said, "ere yet the sun has told
His rosary on the hills—soft breezes swell
To waft you on your voyage; here behold
The promised gifts that will have power to quell
Armida's witchcrafts all, and thaw each murmured spell."

II.

But they the' expected summons had forerun,
Were up, and robed in arms from head to feet,
And straight, by paths ne'er gazed on by the sun,
Following their host, returning they repeat
The steps they took to his romantic seat
The previous day; but to the river side
When they were come, the Senior stayed to greet
His parting guests: "Farewell, my friends!" he cried,
"Here must I leave you; go, good-fortune be your guide!"

III.

Embarked, the river with harmonious flow
The stranded vessel buoyantly upbore,
As, tossed into the stream, a leafy bough
Is wont to rise, and, without sail or oar,
Floated them gently to the verdant shore;
There as the spacious ocean they surveyed—
A little vessel with vermilion prore
Steered nigh, wherein was seen the destined maid,
And well the bounding bark her guiding hand obeyed.

IV.

Her locks hung curled around her brow; her eyes
Were like the dove's, kind, tender, calm and true;
Her face an angel's, bright, and Paradise
Was in each radiant smile and look she threw;
Her robe from white to red, from red to blue,
Lilach, green, purple, fleetingly and fast,
Long as you looked, diversified its hue;
You gaze again, the precious purple's past,
And a fresh tint appears, diviner than the last.

V.

The feathers thus which on the neck genteel
Of the impassioned dove their circles spread,
Not for one moment the same tint reveal,
But in the sun ten thousand colours shed;
Now they a necklace seem of rubies red,
Of emeralds now they imitate the light,
Then—let the gentle bird but turn its head—
They shift from green to black, from black to bright,
Then take the tints of all, still more to charm the sight.

VI.

"Enter," she said, "O happy youths! the bark,
Wherein from sea to sea I safely ply;
In which the heaviest weights grow light, the dark
Rough billows smooth, and calm the stormiest sky;
Me in his love and favour the Most High
Sends as your guide:" the Lady spake, and now
Guiding her painted gondola more nigh,
O'er the glad waves that round in homage bow,
The green saluted shore strikes lightly with her prow.

VII.

Her charge received, the cable she upcurls,
Frees the fixed keel, and launches from the land;
Loose to the wind the silken sail unfurls,
And rules the rudder with a dexterous hand;
Swell the full sails, as glorying to be fanned;
Heaves the swoln stream, so deep with recent rain,
It might have borne a fleet well gunned and manned;
But her light frigate it would well sustain,
Though to its usual state the waters were to wane.

VIII.

Shrill airs unusual sing within the sails,
And swiftly speed them from the verdant shore;
The waters whiten to the active gales,
And round the vessel murmur, foam, and roar.
But now they reach to where its loud waves hoar
The river quiets in a broader bed;
There, by the greedy sea embraced, its store
Melts into nought, or nought apparent, wed
With the vast world of waves before them greenly spread.

IX.

The sounding margin of the rough rude main
Is scarcely touched by the enchanted pine,
Than the black clouds that loured, presaging rain,
Clear off at once, and leave the morning fine;
The mountain-waves, smoothed by a charm divine,
Fall flat, or if a zephyr intervene,
It does but curl the clear blue hyaline;
And ne'er in heaven's benignant face was seen
A smile so sweet as now, a purple so serene.

X.

She sails past Ascalon, and cheerly drives
Her beauteous bark betwixt the south and west;
And near to stately Gaza soon arrives,
Once but a haven held in slight request,
But year by year increasing as the rest
Went to decay, a city now it stands,
Of power, and strength, and merchandise possessed;
And at this instant, countless as its sands,
Myriads of armed men o'erspread the bordering lands.

XI.

To land the warriors look, and see the plains
With countless rich pavilions whitened o'er,
And knights, and squires, and steeds with glistening reins
Pass to and fro betwixt the town and shore;
Camels and burdened elephants, whose roar
Comes mellowed o'er the main, pace side by side,
And stamp the sands to dust; with many an oar
Flash the vext waves, and in the harbour wide,
Galleys, and light caiques, and ships at anchor ride.

XII.

Some with strong rowers brushed the buxom wave;
Some spread their wings out to the winds, and flew;
Their sharp swift beaks the liquid seas engrave;
Foam the raised billows as the keels glide through.
"Though," said the Lady then, "the ocean blue
And yellow plains are filled, as you behold,
With hosts and navies of the trustless crew,
Fresh bands on bands, beneath his moon of gold,
By the strong tyrant yet remain to be enrolled.

XIII.

"Sole from his own or neighbouring realms are drawn
These troops; more distant aid he yet awaits;
For to the regions of the noon and morn
Extends his influence with barbaric states;
So that I hope we shall, with prosperous fates,
Have made return, ere from this subject-coast
He to Jerusalem his camp translates;
He, or whatever Captain in his post
May o'er his other chiefs be raised to rule the host."

XIV.

Then as an eagle passes one by one
All lesser birds, and soars to such a height,
That she appears confounded with the sun,
Her form unfixed by the acutest sight;—
So, betwixt ship and ship, her rapid flight
The gay and graceful gondola holds on,
Without a fear or care, however slight,
Who may arrest or chase her, and anon
Is from the sailors flit, and out of prospect gone.

XV.

Past Raffia town she in a moment flew,
The first in Syria seen by those who steer
From fruitful Egypt, and had soon in view
The barren isle of lonely Rhinocere;
Not distant, trees o'er waving trees appear
To clothe a hill embrowning all the deep
That bathes its base;[12] not unremembered here,
Urned in its heart, the bones of Pompey sleep;
Round sigh the winds and woods; beneath, the waters weep.

XVI.

They next behold, by Damietta driven,
How to the sea proud Nile the tribute pays
Of his celestial treasures, by his seven
Famed mouths, and by a hundred minor ways:
Then past the City built in ancient days
By the brave youth of Macedon, who bore
Palms from all lands, she sails, and soon surveys
The Pharian isle, an isle at least of yore,
But by an isthmus now connected with the shore.

XVII.

She leaves to starboard Rhodes and Crete unseen,
And to the' adjacent shore of Libya stands;
Along the sea productive, tilled, and green,
But inly thronged with snakes and barren sands:
Barca she passes—passes by the lands
Where stood Cyrene, who no more presides
Queen of the silent waste! and soon commands
With Ptolomet the cypress wood, whence guides
Lethe the fabled flow of his oblivious tides.

[12] Mount Cæsius.

XVII.

Syrtes, the seamen's curse, before the wind
She flies aloof, and far to seaward steers;
And, doubling Cape Judeca, leaves behind
Swift Magra's stream, till Tripoli appears
Crowning the coast; due north, low Malta rears
Her cliffs, but Malta they not now behold;
To shun the lesser Syrtes, which she fears,
She tacks; but, past Alzerbo, coasts more bold
The land where dwelt the mild Lotophagi of old.

XIX.

Next on the crooked shore they Tunis see,
Whose bay a hill on either side embrowns—
Tunis, rich, stately, honourable, and free,
Beyond all other Mauritanian towns;
Right opposite to which Sicilia crowns
The sea, and, roughly rising o'er the flood,
In sombre shade Cape Lilybæum frowns;
Here now the Damsel points where Carthage stood,
Rival so long of Rome, and drunk with Roman blood.

XX.

Low lie her towers; sole relics of her sway,
Her desert shores a few sad fragments keep;
Shrines, temples, cities, kingdoms, states decay;
O'er urns and arcs triumphal deserts sweep
Their sands, or lions roar, or ivies creep;
Yet man, proud worm, resents that coming Night
Should shroud his eyes, in no perpetual sleep!
Biserta now they reach in silent flight,
Sardinia's distant isle receding on the right.

XXI.

Then scudding by the vast Numidian plains,
Where wandering shepherds wont their flocks to feed,
Bugia and Algiers, the accursed dens
Of corsairs, rise, approach, and retrocede;
By Oran's towers they pass with equal speed,
And, coasting the steep cliffs of Tingitan,
Now named Morocco, famous for its breed
Of elephants and lions, they began
Granada's adverse shores through azure mists to scan.

XXII.

And now Al Tarik's Straits they intersect,
Alcides' work, as gray traditions feign;
Haply an isthmus did the shores connect,
Till some concussion rent its rocks in twain;
And, by irruption of the horned main,
Abyla here and Calpe there was placed;
And Libya, sundered from romantic Spain,
Nor more as friends, but foes each other faced—
Such power Time hath to change, and lay strong bulwarks waste

XXIII.

Four times the morn has tinted Ocean's cheek,
Since the gay bark its voyage first begun;
Nor has it entered once or port or creek,
For rest or stores,—well furnished, need was none;
It now the entrance of the strait has won,
Shoots the slight pass, and, far as sight can flee,
Into the pathless infinite is run:
If, land-locked, here so spacious seems the sea,
There, where it rolls round earth, what must the' appearance be!

XXIV.

No longer now each city that succeeds
Rich Cadiz o'er the billows they descry;
Fast wealthy Cadiz, fast all land recedes,
Sky girds the Ocean, Ocean bounds the sky:
Said Ubald then; "Fair pilot! make reply,
If on the boundless sea through which we glide
So swift, bark e'er before was known to ply—
And if beyond this world of waves reside
Men of like modes with ours?" the Gondolier replied:

XXV.

"When Hercules the monsters had subdued
That haunted Libya and the realms of Spain,
Through all your coasts his conquests he pursued,
Yet durst not tempt the' unfathomable main;
Here then he raised his Pillars, to restrain
In too close bounds the daring of mankind;
But these his marks Ulysses did disdain,
And, fond of knowledge still, his curious mind
E'en by Alcides' laws refused to be confined.

XXVI.

"The straits he passed, and on the' Atlantic sailed,
Bold as the Sea-God in his fish-drawn shell;
But nought, alas, his naval skill availed,
The roaring billows rang his funeral knell!
The secrets of his fate no records tell,
Where bleached his bones, or whither drove his sail;
If any since were driven out by the swell
Of wave or wind, they perished in the gale,
Or came not back, at least, to tell the' adventurous tale.

XXVII.

"Thus still this sea rests unexplored; it boasts
A thousand isles, a thousand states unknown;
Nor void of men, nor barren are the coasts,
But fertile, rich, and peopled as your own;
Nor can the sun which cheers your milder zone,
Be in its quickening virtue lifeless there,
But earth is heaped with fruits and blossoms blown:"
Said Ubald then; "Of this new world so fair,
Be pleased the worship, laws, and customs to declare."

XXVIII.

"As various as the tribes," she made reply,
"Their rites, and languages, and customs are;
Some Earth, the general mother, glorify,
Some worship beasts, the sun, and morning star;
Whilst some in woods and wildernesses far
Spare not to deify the Prince of Hell,
And heap their boards with captives slain in war;
In short, most impious are their rites, and fell
The faith of all the tribes that west of Calpe dwell."

XXIX.

"Will then," the knight rejoined, "that God who came
From heaven to' illuminate the human heart,
Shut every ray of Truth's celestial flame
From that, which forms of earth so large a part?"
"No," she replied, "each humanising art
Shall yet be theirs; e'en kings shall coincide
The holy Faith and Gospels to impart;
Nor think indeed that this extent of tide
Shall from your world these tribes for ever thus divide.

XXX.

"The time shall come, when ship-boys e'en shall scorn
To have Alcides' fable on their lips,
Seas yet unnamed, and realms unknown adorn
Your charts, and with their fame your pride eclipse;
Then the bold Argo of all future ships
Shall circumnavigate and circle sheer
Whate'er blue Tethys in her girdle clips,
Victorious rival of the Sun's career—
And measure e'en of Earth the whole stupendous sphere.

XXXI.

"A Genoese knight shall first the' idea seize,
And, full of faith, the trackless deep explore;
No raving winds, inhospitable seas,
Thwart planets, dubious calms, or billows' roar,
Nor whatsoe'er of risk or toil may more
Terrific show, or furiously assail,
Shall make that mighty mind of his give o'er
The wonderful adventure, or avail
In close Abyla's bounds his spirit to impale.

XXXII.

"'T is thou, Columbus, in new zones and skies,
That to the wind thy happy sails must raise,
Till Fame shall scarce pursue thee with her eyes,
Though she a thousand eyes and wings displays!
Let her of Bacchus and Alcides praise
The savage feats, and do thy glory wrong,
With a few whispers tossed to after days:
These shall suffice to make thy memory long
In history's page endure, or some divinest song."

XXXIII.

She said, and sliced through foam towards the west
Her course awhile, then to the south inclined,
And saw—now Titan rolling down to rest,
And now the youthful Morning rise behind;
And when with rosy light and dews refined
Aurora cheers the world, more sail she crowds;
Till, in blue distance breaking, as the wind
Curls off the mist that all the' horizon shrouds,
They see a mountain rise, whose summits reach the clouds.

XXXIV.

As they advance the vapours melt, nor more
Their wished inspection of the isle prevent;
Like the vast pyramids 't was seen to soar,
Sharp in its peak, and widening in extent
Down to its base; it seemed to represent
The burning hill 'neath which the Giant lies
That warred on Jove, for with like sulphurous scent
It smokes by day, and still, as daylight dies,
With ruddy fires lights up the circumambient skies.

XXXV.

Then other islands, other mountains mild,
Less steep and lofty, their regards engage;
The Happy Isles, the Fortunate! so styled
By the fond lyrists of the antique age;
Which warrior, sophist, priest, and gifted sage
Believed so favoured by the heavens benign,
As to produce, untilled, in every stage
Of growth, its fruits; unpruned the fancied vine
At once flowered, fruited, filled, and gushed with generous wine

XXXVI.

Here the fat olive ever buds and blooms,
And golden honeys from old oaks distil,
And rivers slide from mountain-greens and glooms,
In silver streams, with murmurs sweet or shrill:
And here cool winds and dews all summer chill
The heats, and the calm halycon builds her nest,
With every beauteous bird of tuneful bill;
And here are placed the' Elysian Fields, where rest,
In fair unfading youth, the spirits of the blest.

XXXVII.

To these the Lady made: "And now," said she,
"The destined haven of your hopes is near;
The promised isles of Fortune now you see,
Whose fame has reached, if not fatigued your ear
With its uncertain echoes; Fiction here
Has not been idle; rich they are, and gay,
And pleasant, but not quite what they appear
In poesy:" she said, and in her way,
Passed the first isle of ten that clear in prospect lay.

XXXVIII.

Then Charles: "If, Lady, with our enterprise
The' excursion suits, now let us leap ashore,
And mark what yet no European eyes
Have viewed—the people see, the place explore,
The rites they use, the Genius they adore,
And whatsoe'er may prompt the' inquiry keen
Of envying sages; that, recounting o'er
The perils braved, the strange new objects seen,
I may with honest pride exclaim, 'Yes! there I've been!'"

XXXIX.

"Worthy," the Gondolier replied, "of thee
The' entreaty surely is; but what can I,
If Heaven's severe, inviolable decree
The least compliance with thy wish deny.
The perfect period fixed by God on high
To give this great discovery to the day,
Is not yet come; and thus for you to eye
The Secrets of the Deep, and back convey
The' authentic news, would be his will to disobey.

XL.

"To you 't is granted, by peculiar grace
And superhuman skill, the fame to' acquire
Of rescuing to your world from thraldom base,
A youth whom nations ardently desire;
Let this suffice, for farther to aspire,
Would be to war with fate:" whilst she replies,
The first green isle seems lessening to retire
From notice, and the next sublime to rise,
So blithely o'er the wave the charmed pinnace flies.

XLI.

They now behold how in the same degree
All in long order shun the realms of morn,
And by what equal distances of sea
The happy isles are each from each withdrawn:
Huts, curling smoke, white flocks, and ripening corn
Spoke seven of them inhabited; the rest
Were waste, o'errun with heath and shagged with thorn;
Where, fixed in long hereditary rest,
Secure the lion prowls, the vulture builds her nest.

XLII.

In one they find a lone sequestered place,
Where, to a crescent curved, the shore extends
Two moony horns, that in their sweep embrace
A spacious bay—a rock the port defends;
Inward it fronts, and broad to ocean bends
Its back, whereon each dashing billow dies,
When the wind rises and the storm descends;
Whilst here and there two lofty crags arise,
Whose towers, far out at sea, salute the sailor's eyes.

XLIII.

Safe sleep the silent seas beneath; above,
Black arching woods o'ershade the circled scene;
Within, a grotto opens in the grove,
Pleasant with flowers, with moss, with ivies green,
And waters warbling in the depth unseen;
Needed nor twisted rope nor anchor there
For weary ships: into that so serene
And sheltered hermitage, the maiden fair
Entered, her slender sails unfurling from the air.

XLIV.

"Behold," she said, "the cupolas and towers
That on yon mountain's lofty summit shine!
There Christ's lethargic champion wastes his hours
In dalliance, idlesse, folly, feast and wine:
That slippery, steep ascent of palm and pine
Mount with the rising sun; nor let delay
Seem to you grievous; influences malign
The' important scheme to ruin will betray,
If any hour but that be fixed for the essay.

XLV.

"You yet with easy speed may reach the foot
Of the seen mountain, ere the day's expired:"
Their lovely guide in parting they salute,
And lightly pace at length the shore desired.
They found the way so much to be admired,
So full of goodly prospects, cool with shade,
And smooth withal to tread, that nothing tired;
And when they issued from the last green glade,
High o'er the landscape yet the evening sunbeams played.

XLVI.

They see that to the mountain's stately head
O'er nodding crags and ruins they must climb;
Below, with snows and frosts each path was spread,
For bloomy heath exchanged and odorous thyme;
Cedar, and pine, and cypress more sublime
Round its white shoulders tossed their verdant locks;
Sweet lilies peeped from forth the hoary rime,
Whilst (force of magic!) pinks, geraniums, stocks,
And roses, fully flowered, hung clustering round the rocks.

XLVII.

Within a savage cave beneath the mount,
Closed in with shades, the warriors passed the night;
But when the Sun from heaven's eternal fount
Through the brown forest shed his golden light,
"Up, up!" at once they cried; and either knight
With rival zeal along the track of frost
Began the' ascent; when, on their startled sight,
Whence they knew not, in various colours glossed,
Their onward path a fierce and frightful serpent crossed.

XLVIII.

Her head and scaly crest of pallid gold
She raised erect, and swelled her neck with ire;
Lightened her eyes; and, hiding as she rolled
A length of way, she poison breathed and fire;
Now she recoiled into herself, now nigher
Her tangled rings, distending many a yard,
She slid along with mischievous desire,
Presenting all her stings the pass to guard,—
Much she the knights amazed, but did not much retard.

XLIX.

Already Charles, the monster to assail,
Had drawn his sword, when out Ubaldo spake:
"Soft! what is it you do? by arms so frail
How can you hope to quell the' enchanted snake?"
His golden wand of an immortal make
He shook, so that the demon, smit with fear,
No longer hissing, sought the tangled brake;
Needed no second sound to warn its ear;
Instant it slipt away, and left the passage clear.

L.

A little further on, with sour disdain
A roaring lion the strict pass denied;
Tossing aloft the terrors of his mane,
And his voracious jaws expanding wide,
He with redoubling fury lashed his side,
And to the knights advanced with hasty tread;
But when the wand immortal he espied,
A secret instinct chilled his heart with dread,
And quelled his native fire; he howled, and howling fled,

LI.

Their track the venturous couple follow fast,
But numerous legions yet before them rise
Of savage beasts, terrific as the past,
Differing in voice, in movement, and in guise;
All monstrous forms, all wild enormities,
All the grim creatures in their sternest moods
That betwixt Nile and Atlas Titan eyes,
Seemed gathered there, with all the raging broods
That haunt the' Ercynian caves or old Hyrcanian woods.

LII.

But e'en this phalanx, massy, fierce, and bold
As it appeared, could not the pair affright,
Much less repel; for of the wand of gold
A single motion put them all to flight.
And now they climb victorious to the height
Of the rude precipice, without delay;
Save that the Alpine cliffs and glaciers, white
With drifted snows that round austerely lay,
Of their sublime ascent more tedious make the way.

LIII.

But when at length the steep acclivity
Is scaled, and passed the snows and breezes keen,
Beneath the sunshine of a summer sky
They find an even, smooth, and spacious green.
Here in a clime delightfully serene
His wings the everlasting Zephyr shakes,
And breathes a ceaseless sweetness o'er the scene;
For here the sun one golden measure makes,
Nor ever charms asleep, nor e'er the wind awakes.

LIV.

Not as elsewhere with fervours frosts severe,
Or clouds with calms divide the happy hours;
But heaven, than whitest crystal e'en more clear,
A flood of sunshine in all seasons showers;
Nursing to fields their herbs, to herbs their flowers,
To flowers their smell, to leaves the' immortal trees;
Here by its lake, the splendid palace towers
On marble columns rich with golden frieze,
For leagues and leagues around o'ergazing hills and seas.

LV.

The warriors weary found themselves and faint,
From their long travel up the steep rough hill:
And loitering through the pleasant gardens went,
Walking or resting at their own sweet will;
When lo, a fountain whose light music shrill
Allures the thirsty pilgrim, gleamed in view!
In one tall column it descended chill,
And in a thousand crystal fragments flew,
Sprinkling with orient pearl the plants that round it blew.

LVI.

But through the grass these delicate cascades
The same deep channel in conclusion found,
And under curtain of perpetual shades
Ran warbling by, cool, tranquil, and embrowned;
Yet still so clear, that in its depths profound
Each glistening wave amid the sands was seen,
With all its curls of beauty; whilst around,
The mossy banks formed couches soft and green,
Inlaid with odorous herbs, and violets strewn between.

LVII.

"See here the fount of laughter! see the stream
To which such fatal qualities belong!
Now," they exclaimed, "let us avoid the dream
Of warm desire, and in resolve be strong;
Now shut our ears to the fair Siren's song,
And to each smile of feminine deceit
Close the fond eye!" thus warned, they pass along,
Until they reach to where the waters sweet
Break out a broader bed, and form a spacious sheet.

LVIII.

Here, served on ivory, stood all sumptuous food
That Taste could wish, or Luxury purvey,
And chattering, laughing, in the crystal flood
Two naked virgins, full of wanton play;
Now kissing, wrestling, breaking now away,
Now striving which the other should outswim;
Now diving, floating, as the waters sway,
Sometimes above, sometimes below the brim,
Marking their course concealed by some voluptuous limb.

LIX.

These swimming damsels, beautiful and bare,
These warriors' bosoms somewhat did subdue,
So that they stayed to watch them, whilst the pair
Seemed all intent their pastimes to pursue:
One meanwhile, starting upward, full to view
Of the clear heavens her swelling breasts displayed,
And all that might with rapture more endue
The eye, to the white waist; the waves that played
Round her, each limb beneath pellucidly arrayed.

LX.

As from the waves the glittering Star of morn
Comes, dropping nectar; or, as rising slow
From Ocean's fruitful foam when newly born,
The Queen of Love and Beauty seemed in show,
So she appeared, so charmed; her tresses so
From all their golden rings bright humour rained,
Rich with the colours of the showery bow;
Whilst looking round, the knights but then she feigned
To see, and back recoiled, offended, shocked, and pained.

LXI.

Her tresses knotted in a single braid,
She in an instant loosened and shook down;
Which thickly flowing to her feet, arrayed
Her polished limbs as with a golden gown:
But oh! when fell the curtain from her crown,
What an enchanting spectacle was fled!
Yet 't was enchantment, so to find it flown:
Thus gloriously with locks and waves o'erspread,
She from them turned askance, rejoicing, rosy red.

LXII.

She smiled, she crimsoned deep, and all the while
Her smile the sweeter shewed the more she blushed,
And the sweet crimson sweeter for the smile
That o'er her tender face in sunshine rushed;
Then with a voice so mild it might have hushed
The nightingale, and taken an angel prey,
Rich from her warbling lips these accents gushed:
"O happy pilgrims! favoured to survey
Regions so full of peace, a Paradise so gay!

LXIII.

"This is the haven of the world; here Rest
Dwells with Composure, and that perfect bliss,
Which in the Golden Age fond men possessed,
In liberty and love unknown to this;
You now may lay aside the' incumbrances
Of arms, and safely hang them on the trees,
Sacred to Peace; all else but folly is;
Seek then soft quiet, seek indulgent ease,
Love's the sole captain here, young Love's the lord to please.

LXIV.

"The fields of battle here are mosses green
And beds of roses, where—you dream the rest;
We will conduct you to our fairy queen,
The queen whose bounty makes her servants blest.
You of that happy band shall be impressed,
Whom she has destined for her joys; but first,
Your weary limbs of those rude arms divest,
In these cool waters be your dust dispersed,
And at yon board indulge your hunger, taste, and thirst."

LXV.

Thus sang the one; her sister played the mime,
In act and glance outpleading her appeal,
As swift or slow to the melodious chime
Of lutes and viols the blithe dancers wheel.
But to these wiles the knights in triple steel
Of stern resolve had shut their souls; and hence,
The tunes they sing, the beauties they reveal,
Their angel looks and heavenly eloquence,
But circle round and round, nor reach the seat of sense.

LXVI.

Or if of such sweet airs and glowing charms
Aught stirs the soil where buds unchaste Desire,
The heart soon Reason fills with her alarms,
And with strong hand roots up each rising brier:
Vanquished the nymphs remain; the knights retire,
And, without bidding them adieu, pass on;
These reach the palace, those with fruitless ire
Crimsoning afresh at the repulse, anon
Dive in the waves, and deep beyond all sight are gone.

CANTO XVI.

Stanza XVII.

ARGUMENT.

THE spacious palace of the' enchanting Dame
The warriors tread, where lost Rinaldo lies;
And speed so well, that, full of wrath and shame,
He bursts his bonds, and with them quickly flies:
She, to retain her loved deserter, tries
All powers of language and of tears—in vain—
He parts; to' avenge her wrongs, on Dis she cries,
Destroys her palace, and, in high disdain,
Flies through the stormy skies in her aerial wain.

I.

Round is the spacious pile; and in its heart,
Set like a gem, a garden is insphered,
More decked by nature and enriched by art,
Than the most beautiful that e'er appeared
To flower in old romance; and round it, reared
The Stygian sprites unnumbered galleries,
Harmonious, seen at distance, but, when neared,
A trackless maze discordant to the eyes,—
Through all these tortuous coils their secret passage lies.

II.

Through the chief gate they tread the marble floors,
For full a hundred grace the spacious hold;
Of fine and figured silver, here the doors
On their smooth hinges sing, of shining gold:
Awhile they pause the figures to behold
Cast on the squares; for, with extreme surprise,
They see the metal rivalled by the mould;
Speech fails alone, but, to the trusting eyes,
The sprightly shapes e'en speak, and limbed with life arise.

III.

Here midst Mæonian girls the Grecian Mars
Sits, telling fond romantic tales; and he
Who stormed black Orcus, and upheld the stars,
Now twirls the spindle with a maiden's glee;
Young Love looks on and laughs; whilst Iole
In her unwarlike hands is seen to bear
His murderous arms with proud mock-majesty,
And on her back the lion's hide to wear,
Too rough a vest for limbs so finely turned and fair!

IV.

Near heaved a sea whose azure surface changed,
As close you looked, and into silver splashed;
Two adverse navies in the midst were ranged
For war—blue lightnings from the armour flashed;
In gold the bright and burning billows dashed
And all Leucate did on fire appear,
Ere the beaks grappled, and the falchions clashed;
Augustus there all Rome, Antonius here
Brought up his Eastern kings, and couched his Memphian spear.

V.

You would declare the rifted Cyclades
Concurred, and mountains did with mountains jar,
When with their tower-like vessels those and these
Rushed o'er the brine, and shocked in mortal war:
Here, like the sparkles of a glancing star,
Darts fly, and fire-balls blaze; there, bloody dyes
The virgin whiteness of the waters mar:
Whilst neither wins, lo where, with heavy eyes,
O'er the vexed waves, alarmed, the' Egyptian beauty flies!

VI.

And flies her Chief? can he relinquish here
The glorious world to which his hopes aspire?
He flies not, no, nor fears; he does not fear,
But follows her, drawn on by fond desire:
You see him (like a man whom now the fire
Of love torments, and now, as shame prevails,
Disdain,) alternately regard, as ire
And tenderness were cast in equal scales,
Now the still dubious fight, and now her lessening sails.

VII.

Then in the secret creeks of fruitful Nile
He in her lap appears for death to wait,
And with the pleasure of her lovely smile
Sweetens the bitter stroke of hasting fate.—
With such like arguments of various date
And issue in Love's story, were embossed
The glittering metals of that princely gate;
The figured tales long time the knights engrossed;
At length the charm they broke, and o'er the threshold crossed.

VIII.

As 'twixt its crooked banks Meander plays,
Curls and uncurls in its uncertain course,
Now to its spring, now to the Ocean strays,
Now meets itself returning to its source:
Such, only intertangled with a force
Yet more mysterious, of this mazy spot
The paths appear; but now they have recourse
To the clear chart, which, pointing out both what
To shun, and what pursue, resolves the' enchanted knot.

IX.

These windings passed, the garden gates unfold,
And the fair Eden meets their glad survey,—
Still waters, moving crystals, sands of gold,
Herbs, thousand flowers, rare shrubs, and mosses grey;
Sunshiny hillocks, shady vales; woods gay,
And grottos gloomy, in one view combined,
Presented were; and what increased their play
Of pleasure at the prospect, was, to find
Nowhere the happy Art that had the whole designed.

X.

So natural seemed each ornament and site,
So well was neatness mingled with neglect,
As though boon Nature for her own delight
Her mocker mocked, till fancy's self was checked;
The air, if nothing else there, is the' effect
Of magic, to the sound of whose soft flute
The blooms are born with which the trees are decked:
By flowers eternal lives the' eternal fruit,
This running richly ripe, whilst those but greenly shoot.

XI.

Midst the same leaves and on the self-same twig
The rosy apple with the' unripe is seen;
Hung on one bough the old and youthful fig,
The golden orange glows beside the green;
And aye, where sunniest stations intervene,
Creeps the curled vine luxuriant high o'erhead;
Here the sour grape just springs the flowers between,
Here yellowing, purpling, blushing ruby red,
Here black the clusters burst, and heavenly nectar shed.

XII.

The joyful birds sing sweet in the green bowers;
Murmur the winds; and, in their fall and rise,
Strike from the fruits, leaves, fountains, brooks, and flowers
A thousand strange celestial harmonies;
When cease the birds, the zephyr loud replies;
When sing the birds, it faints amidst the trees
To whispers soft as lovers' farewell sighs;
Thus, whether loud or low, the bird the breeze,
The breeze obeys the bird, and each with each agrees.

XIII.

One bird there flew, renowned above the rest,
With party-coloured plumes and purple bill,
That in a language like our own expressed
Her joys, but with such sweetness, sense and skill,
As did the hearer with amazement fill;
So far her fellows she outsang, that they
Worshipped the wonder; every one grew still
At her rich voice, and listened to the lay:
Dumb were the woods—the winds and whispers died away.

XIV.

"Ah see," thus she sang, "the rose spread to the morning
Her red virgin leaves, the coy pride of all plants!
Yet half open, half shut midst the moss she was born in,
The less shews her beauty, the more she enchants;
Lo, soon after, her sweet naked bosom more cheaply
She shews! lo, soon after she sickens and fades,
Nor seems the same flower late desired so deeply
By thousands of lovers, and thousands of maids!

XV.

"So fleets with the day's passing footsteps of fleetness
The flower and the verdure of life's smiling scene:
Nor, though April returns with its sunshine and sweetness,
Again will it ever look blooming or green;
Then gather the rose in its fresh morning beauty,
The rose of a day too soon dimmed from above;
Whilst, beloved, we may love, let—to love, be our duty,
Now, now, whilst 't is youth, pluck the roses of love!"[13]

[13] As it is possible the change of measure here introduced may meet with some objectors, I affix a translation of the song in the stanza of Spenser, although it is somewhat perilous to attempt it after him. Vide his Description of the Bower of Bliss, in the "Faery Queen," canto xii. stanzas lxxiv. lxxv.

"Ah see," she sang, "the bashful blushing rose
Spread through green leaves its bosom to the light;
Half bud, half blossom yet, through dews it glows,
And charms the more, the more it shuns the sight!
Ah see how boldly soon it courts the bright
And burning sun; how soon it droops and fades;
Nor seems the same rich blossom of delight
Desired so much in songs and serenades,
By thousand amorous youths and thousand blooming maids!

XVI.

She ceased; and, as approving all they heard,
That tender tune the choirs of birds renew;
The turtles billed, and every brute and bird
In happy pairs to unseen glooms withdrew.
It seemed that the hard oak, the grieving yew,
The chaste sad laurel, and the whole green grove—
It seemed each fruit that blushed, each bud that blew,
The earth, air, sea, and rosy heavens above,
All felt divine desire, and sighed out sweetest love.

XVII.

Midst melody so tender, midst delights
So passing sweet, and midst such tempting snares,
Cautious, serene, and serious go the knights,
And steel their souls to the loose Lydian airs.
Lo, betwixt leaves and leaves, at unawares
Advancing slow, they see, or seem to see—
They see most surely, crown of all their cares!
The lover and his darling lady; he
In the fair lady's lap, on herbs and violets she.

XVIII.

Her veil, flung open, shews her breast; in curls
Her wild hair wooes the summer wind; she dies
Of the sweet passion, and the heat that pearls,
Yet more her ardent aspect beautifies:
A fiery smile within her humid eyes,
Trembling and tender, sparkles like a streak
Of sunshine in blue fountains; as she sighs,
She o'er him hangs; he on her white breast sleek
Pillowing his head reclines, cheek blushing turned to cheek.

"So passes, in the transit of a day,
Of mortal life the verdure and the bloom,
Nor will the sunshine of a second May
The leaf re-open, or the flower relume;
Gather the rose then in its rathe perfume
And morning beauty, ere the skies above
O'ercast the landscape with funereal gloom;
Whilst, loved and loving, none the bliss reprove,
Now, whilst it yet is youth, pluck, pluck the rose of love!"

XIX.

His hungry eye-balls, fixt upon her face,
For her dear beauty pine themselves away;
She bows her head, and in a fond embrace,
Sweet kisses snatches, betwixt war and play,
Now of his just touched eyes, in wilder prey
Now of his coral lips; therewith he heaves
Sighs deep as though his spirit winged its way
To transmigrate in her: amidst the leaves,
This amorous dalliance all each watchful knight perceives.

XX.

A polished glass, whose sheen the stars excelled,
Strange arms! hung pendant at Rinaldo's thigh;
He rose, and to the fair the crystal held,
Her chosen page in each love-mystery:
Both—she with smiling, he with glowing eye,
Mark but one scene of all the scenes they view;
Her angel form and aspect they descry,
She in the glass, he, fond enthusiast! through
A sweeter medium far—her eyes of heavenly blue.

XXI.

She in herself, he glories but in her;
He proud of bondage, of her empire she;
"And why," he murmurs, "so to this recur?
Turn my beloved, turn thine eyes on me—
Those smiling eyes, that no less blessed be,
Than blessed make; ah, know'st thou not, that best
They in mine eye-balls must thy beauty see?
And know'st thou not thy graces are expressed
Less clear in this gay glass than in my faithful breast!

XXII.

"Though me thou scorn, thou might'st at least consent
To mark thine own most interesting face;
Those looks, else unrepaid, must rest content
With joy, if on themselves themselves they place;
So rare an image can no crystal trace,
No glass a perfect Eden can comprise
In its small round; to see aright thy grace
Thou must consult the mirror of the skies;
Heaven is thy glass, the stars reflect thy sparkling eyes."

XXIII.

Armida smiled at this, yet not the less
Kept to her toilet, gathering up behind
Her hair, restricting each resplendent tress
That in loose tangles wantoned in the wind;
The less she curled in rings, and with them twined
Flowers that, like lazuli in gold, impressed
A deeper charm on the beholder's mind;
Then to the native lilies of her breast
She joined the foreign rose, and smoothed her veil and vest.

XXIV.

Not Juno's bird such beauty spreads to show
In her eyed plumes so ravishingly bright,
Nor Iris such, when her celestial bow
Spans the dark cloud with gold and purple light;
But rich beyond all richness shines to sight
The glorious cest which 't is her wont to wear
At all times, e'en though naked, and at night;
A local shape she gave to things of air,
And in it blended all of lovely, sweet, and rare:—

XXV.

Tender disdains, repulses mild, feigned fears,
Kind looks, sweet reconcilements, blissful stings,
Smiles, little love-words, sighs, delicious tears,
Hopes, turtle kisses, music, marriage rings;
Embraces dear, and all ambrosial things
She fused, commingled slowly in the chaste
Bright fire, attempered in cool Lydian springs,
And fashioned thus this talisman of Taste,
Which, in itself a charm, clasps round her charming waist.

XXVI.

At length, their courtship o'er, she farewell took,
Gave him a kiss, sighed, smiled, and went her way;
For o'er the pages of her magic book,
Murmuring her charms, she spent some hours each day.
He, by a kind of charm compelled to stay,
Remained; for not one moment from these groves
Her jealous fear allowed his steps to stray:
Alone mid bees, birds, fountains, flowers, alcoves,
And grots, save when with her, the hermit lover roves.

XXVII.

But when the soft and silent shade recals
The ready lovers to their stolen delights,
Under one roof within the palace walls
They meet, and happy pass harmonious nights.
Now when Armida for severer rites
Had left her hermit love, her pleasant play,
And variegated garden, the two knights,
From the green bushes, where concealed they lay,
Rushed forth in radiant arms whose light enriched the day.

XXVIII.

As the fierce steed, from busy war withdrawn
Awhile to riot in voluptuous ease,
Midst his loved mares loose wantons o'er the lawn,
If chance he hears once more upon the breeze
The spirit-stirring trumpet sound, or sees
The flash of armour, thither, far or near,
He bounds, he neighs, he prances o'er the leas,
Burning to whirl to war the charioteer,
Clash with the rattling car, and knap the sparkling spear.

XXIX.

So fared Rinaldo, when the sudden rays
Of their bright armour on his eye-balls beat;
At once those lightnings set his soul ablaze,
His ardour mounts to all its ancient heat;
Their vivid beam his sparkling eyes repeat,
Drowned though he was, and drunken with the wine
Of siren wantonness: on footsteps fleet,
Ubald meanwhile to where he lay supine
Came, and the diamond shield turned to him, pure and fine.

XXX.

Upon the lucid glass his eyes he rolled,
And all his delicacy saw: his dress,
Breathing rich odours, how it gleamed with gold!
How trimly curled was each lascivious tress!
And with what lady-like luxuriousness
His ornamented sword addressed his side!
So wrapt with flowers it swung, that none could guess
If 't was a wounding weapon, or applied
As a fantastic toy, voluptuous eyes to pride.

XXXI.

As one by heavy sleep in bondage held,
Comes to himself when the long dream takes flight,
So woke the youth when he himself beheld,
Nor could endure the satire of the sight:
Down fell his looks; and instantly, in spite
Of recollected pride, the colour came
Across his face;—in this embarrassed plight,
A thousand times he wished himself in flame,
Ocean, in earth, the' abyss, to shun the glowing shame.

XXXII.

Then spake Ubaldo; "Hearken and give ear!
Asia and Europe to the battle crowd;
Whoever counts or faith or glory dear,
Stands to the strife for Christ against Mahmoud.
Thee, son of Berthold, thee alone, the vowed
To honour and renown, loose idlesse charms
To a small angle of the world, more proud
To play the lover in a lady's arms,
Than champion deathless deeds,—thee only nought alarms!

XXXIII.

"What sleep, what lethargy, what base delights
Have melted down thy manhood, quenched thy zeal?
Up! up! thee Godfrey, thee the camp invites;
For thee bright Victory stays her chariot wheel.
Come, fated warrior, set the final seal
To our emprise! thy coming all expect;
Let the false Saracens confounded feel
That sword from which no armour can protect;
Haste, and in total death destroy the impious sect!"

XXXIV.

He ceased; the noble Infant for a space
Stood stupified, attempting no defence;
But soon as bashfulness to scorn gave place,
Scorn, the fine champion of indignant sense,
Then, with a yet diviner eloquence,
Another redness than of shame rushed o'er
His cheeks, almost atoning his offence;
The rich embroidered ornaments he wore,
Away with hasty hand indignantly he tore.

XXXV.

Begone he would, and through the intricate
Labyrinth of galleries from the garden fled;
Meanwhile Armida, by the regal gate
Starts to behold her savage keeper dead.
At first a vague suspicion, a blind dread,
Then a quick feeling of the fatal truth
Instinctive flashed across her mind; her head
She turned, and saw (too cruel sight!) the youth
Haste from her blest abode, without concern or ruth.

XXXVI.

"Oh cruel! leav'st thou then Armida spurned?"
She would have said, but choking sorrow drowned
The issuing cry, and the faint words returned
With bitter echo in her heart to sound:
Poor wretch! her happiness its term has found;
A power and wisdom above hers constrain
The youth to hurry from the' enchanted ground
With so much speed; she sees it, and in vain
Tries all her wonted arts, the recreant to retain.

XXXVII.

All dreadful strains that e'er Thessalian lips
Spoke to lost spirits, every potent spell
That could arrest the planets, or eclipse,
And call up demons disenchained from hell,
She knew, she tried, yet could not now compel
One gibbering ghost to answer to her cry;
Thus she gave o'er her incantations fell,
And would essay if stronger sorcery
Dwelt in pale Beauty's tear and supplicating eye.

XXXVIII.

Careless of honour, off she ran, she flew;
Where are her vaunts, ah, where her triumphs now!
She who the total sway of Love o'erthrew,
And judgment gave but by her bending brow;
And like her pride was her disdain! oh how,
Loving their love, did she her slaves despise!
Herself alone could she at all allow
To pleasure her, nor aught in man could prize,
Beyond the' effect produced by her two radiant eyes.

XXXIX.

Left and neglected now, she follows swift
Him who forsakes her in his careless scorn;
And summons all her tears up, the poor gift
Of her rejected beauty to adorn:
Headlong she runs, unchecked by brier or thorn;
O'er rugged Alpine rocks and glaciers hoar
Her tender feet adventure to be torn;
Loud cries, as messengers, she sends before,
Which reach not him, till he has reached the winding shore.

XL.

Madly she cries; "Oh cruel fugitive!
That bear'st with thee my dearer half away,
Either take this, or that restore, or give
Death to them both together: stay, O stay!
Let my last words to thee at least find way,
I say not kisses: these sweet gifts from thee
Some worthier favourite may receive, delay
Thy flight, unkind! what dost thou fear from me?
Thou canst as well refuse, when thou hast ceased to flee.'

XLI.

"Signior," said then Ubaldo, "to refuse
Her wish, would be unkindness too severe:
Most sweetly bathed in sorrow's briny dews,
Armed with fond prayers and beauty she draws near;
Thy tempted virtue will shine forth more clear,
If, listening to the siren, thou remain
Proof to her winning voice and starting tear;
So reason shall resume her peaceful reign
O'er sense, and thus refined, her native light regain."

XLII.

At this he stayed until she reached the shore;
Pale she came up, faint, breathless, all in tears,
And mournful past expression; but the more
She mourns, her beauty more divine appears:
Eager she eyes him; but mistrustful fears,
Disdain, amazement, or excess of woe
Keeps her quite mute; Rinaldo volunteers
No look, no glance at her, at least in show,
But stands with bashful eyes at stealth unclosing slow.

XLIII.

As skilful singers, ere they strain on high
Their voice in the loud song's symphonious flow,
Prepare the mind for the full harmony,
By sweetest preludes, warbled soft and low:
Thus she, who had not, e'en in deepest woe,
Wholly lost memory of her fraudful art,
First breathed a symphony of sighs forth, so
By just degrees to predispose the heart,
To which her words the print of pity would impart.

XLIV.

Then thus; "Expect not I shall fondly bow,
Cruel! to thee, as loves to lovers should;
Such once we were—if such no longer now,
If e'en the thought of thine impassioned mood
Move thy displeasure, as I judge, be wooed,
At least, my mournful plea to entertain
As foemen the proud prayers of foes subdued;
My suit is such, as thou with little pain
Mayst grant, and yet keep all thy harshness and disdain.

XLV.

"If me thou hate, and in it tak'st delight,
Hate on, I come not to disturb thy joy;
Just it may seem, just be it, for with spite
Thy sect, thyself I laboured to destroy!
What fierce expedients did I not employ,
A Pagan born, to sap your power! nay, more,
Thee did I hate, thee chase, and thee decoy
To the strange borders of an unknown shore,
Far from the din of arms, where only sea-waves roar.

XLVI.

"And, which seems most to move thy grief and shame,
Add with how much of tender, kind, and sweet
Thy frozen heart I fondled into flame,
An impious fondness, sure, a vile deceit!
To let my virgin fruit be plucked and eat;
My blooms be spoiled; my tamelessness subdued,
And cast my beauties at a tyrant's feet!
Those youthful charms for which a thousand sued,
To a mere stranger given, unhoped, unwished, unwooed!

XLVII.

"Yes! number them amongst my sins, and let
These many crimes against thee hasten more
Thy prompt departure; heed not, but forget
This thy fair mansion, so beloved before!
Go, pass the seas; fight, glut thyself with gore;
Quick to the task! I bid thee o'er the brine;
Destroy our faith—'t will be but what you swore;
What say I? ours? ah no! not mine! not mine!
I, cruel idol! seek alone thy reverenced shrine!

XLVIII.

"Let me but follow thee! 't is all I crave;
This mightst thou grant, though I had proved unkind;
Seldom the conqueror parts without his slave,
The robber rarely leaves his prey behind:
Me with thy other hapless prisoners bind
For exhibition; to each other aim
At praiseful acts, let this, I pray, be joined—
That all may point the finger, and exclaim,
'There the proud scorner goes, now scorned with equal shame!'

XLIX.

"A bondslave spurned, why longer do I keep
My locks unshorn, by thee now rendered vile?
Cut them clean off! the ground they shall not sweep,
To mock the misery of my servile style.
Thee will I follow from this hated isle;
Thee, when most fervent glows the fight, pursue
Through hostile crowds; I shall not want the while
Spirit or strength a thousand things to do,—
Bear darts, guide steeds, and strain myself the bending yew.

L.

"Either thy shield or shield-bearer, which best
May please thee, I in thy defence will be;
Nor spare my person—through this throat and breast
The sword shall pass, before it injures thee;
The foe will scarce have so much cruelty
As to strike then, but will perhaps direct
Their darts elsewhere, not to endanger me;
And smother their fierce vengeance, in respect
Of these poor charms, to which thou dost such strange neglect.

LI.

"Wretch! do I still presume, still place my worth
In these scorned charms, which nothing can obtain!"
More would she say, but bitter tears gush forth,
Like springs from Alpine rocks, or falling rain;
She sought to grasp his hand; she sought to strain,
In suppliant attitude, his robes; but no—
Himself he curbed, his tenderness restrained,
And started back; love found no entrance, though
The swelling tears rose high, and stood prepared to flow.

LII.

Love entered not, to fan within his breast
The ancient flame which reason had congealed;
But Pity entered in its place at least,
Love's chaste companion, ever prone to yield;
And touched him so, that scarcely he concealed,
Scarce, with much pain, the yearning tears repressed;
Yet, though she loudly to his heart appealed,
The fond emotion he within compressed,
And when he could, the fair thus tranquilly addressed.

LIII.

"I feel for thee, Armida! if my powers
Were such, how gladly would I cure the pain
Of the ill-starred warm passion that devours
Thy soul—I have no hatred, no disdain;
No wish for vengeance moves me; peace I fain
Would give thee! wrongs I know not of, much less
Thee as a slave or foe would I retain;
True, thou hast erred; and now all tenderness,
Now all dislike, hast loved and hated to excess:

LIV.

"But these are frailties shared by all, and them
Thy native laws, thy sex, and youth excuse;
I too have sinned, nor thee can I condemn,
If thou to pardon me dost not refuse.
Midst the dear images I ne'er can lose,
Thine shall be dearest still; on thee, sweet maid,
In joy and woe 't will be my bliss to muse;
Thy champion still—thou still shalt be obeyed,
Far as with honour suits, and our divine crusade.

LV.

"Let now our mutual faults and follies cease,
And with our faults our shame too have an end;
And in this lonely island sleep in peace
Their sad sweet memories, let them here descend
As to the silent grave; where'er I wend,
This only act of mine let no one trace,
None whisper to the wind; nor thou, dear friend,
Do, I implore thee, aught that would debase
Thy name, thy worth, thy charms, or shame thy princely race!

LVI.

"Farewell! I go; thy wishes must be vain,
Fate grants them not; Armida, thou art wise!
Or go some happier way, or here remain,
And calm the thoughts that to such wildness rise."
She, whilst the pensive warrior thus replies,
Restless, disturbed, could scarce her passion stay;
Long time she rolled on him her angry eyes,
Nor knew in what fierce terms her scorn to say;
At length the storm broke loose, and these mad words found way:—

LVII.

"Thee no Sophia bore, no Azzo gave
Blood for thy being! thy fierce parents were
The icy Caucasus, the mad sea-wave,
Some Indian tiger or Hyrcanian bear!
Why should I longer fawn? did the man e'er
Show but one sign of warm humanity?
Changed he his colour at my sharp despair?
Did he but dash one tear-drop from his eye?
Or breathe for all my pangs a single suffering sigh?

LVIII.

"What things shall I pass over, what repeat?
He swears he 's mine, yet with the whirlwind flies;
Good, merciful, kind victor! to forget,
And pardon your fond foe's indignities.
Hear how he counsels! hark but to his wise
And modest words! this coy Xenocrates,
Hear how he talks of love! O Gods! O skies!
And can you suffer holy men like these,
To burn your towers and towns, and act what sins they please?

LIX.

"Begone, false wretch, with all that peace of mind
Thy treason leaves to me! begone, I say!
Soon shall my ghost, a haunting shade behind,
From which thou canst not tear thyself away,
Dog all thy thoughts by night, thy steps by day;
With snakes and torches, a new Fury, I,
Much as I loved thee, so much will dismay;
And if it be thy fate the strife to try,
Scaped from the roaring waves and tempests of the sky—

LX.

"There, midst the dead and dying, thou shalt fall,
And pay for all my wrongs, false chevalier!
Oft on Armida's name distracted call,
In thy last groans, which soon I hope to hear!"
But there the mourner's spirit failed, nor clear
Were the last accents; her sweet colour flies,
She faints, she falls, her speaking lips adhere,
An icy sweat on her cold forehead lies,
Droops her dejected head, and close her radiant eyes.

LXI.

Thine eyes are closed, Armida; the stern powers
Of fate deny all solace to thy woe;
Look up, poor girl, and see what bitter showers
Stream from the eyes of thine imagined foe!
Couldst thou but hear his sighs, couldst thou but know
The pain he feels, it must thy love renew,
And in thy bitter cup fresh sweetness throw;
All that he can, he gives to thee, still true,
And takes (thou think'st it not), a last—a fond adieu.

LXII.

What should he do? leave on the naked sands
The Lady thus, betwixt alive and dead?
Pity forbids, and courtesy withstands,
But hard necessity compels—'t is sped;
One farewell kiss—he parts; the grot they tread,
And launch from land; mild blow the western gales
Midst the rich tresses of the pilot's head;
Fast o'er green ocean glide the golden sails:
To land he looks, till land his grieving vision fails.

LXIII.

Waked from her trance, Armida, with a start,
Looked round her—all was silence; all was shade;
"And *is* he gone?" she said, "and *had* he heart
To leave me thus, nor for a moment stayed,
In doubt of life or death, a little aid
To lend? nor for one moment lingered o'er,
To watch the pale, mute ruin he had made?
And do I love him still, and on this shore
With folded arms still sit, still unrevenged deplore?

LXIV.

"Why weep I longer? other arms and arts
Command I not? I will the wretch pursue;
Nor shall the deep o'er which his bark departs,
Nor heaven's high vault secure him from his due;
I will o'ertake him; cleave his heart in two,
And hang his severed head upon a spot
Where all like traitors may the monster view;
Versed as he is in guile, I will outplot
His brain—alas, I rave! I talk I know not what!

LXV.

"Then, wretched girl! thou shouldst have wreaked thy hate,
When he lay safely curling in thy chain;
That had been something worth! now all too late
Come thy hot wrath and thy incensed disdain!
But, if my beauty and ingenious brain
Can nothing here, not fruitless shall this strong
And passionate desire of mine remain;
Oh my scorned charms! yours, yours was all the wrong;
To you shall the dear task of vengeance now belong.

LXVI.

"These charms of mine shall be the fixed reward
Of him who slays the man! your swords prepare,
Oh my famed lovers! though the task seem hard,
Yet great and glorious is the deed you dare:
I, who in independent state shall wear
The crown of rich Damascus, will be nigh,
In guerdon of the victim; if this rare
Reward appear too poor, revenge to buy,
Nature! I thank thee not for charms ill praised so high.

LXVII.

"False, fatal gifts! I spurn you back; I scorn
The hated kingdom which I have to give;
I hate my life, the hour when I was born,
Alone in hope of sweet revenge I live!"
In broken words, enraged, thus does she grieve,
Thus rave; then turns with a distracted pace
From the lone shore, the moments to retrieve;
Showing what fury in her heart found place,
By her dishevelled hair, fierce eyes, and crimsoning face.

LXVIII.

Reached her abode, with foaming lips she called
Three hundred ghosts from Tartarus the dun;
Black clouds the tranquil face of heaven appalled,
Pale in a moment grew the' eternal sun;
The whirlwinds blustered on the hills, air spun,
Hell bellowed at her feet; then might you hear
Through the enchanted halls the damned run,
Unchained and raging, now far-off, now near—
Shrieks, hissings, yells, drear groans, and whisperings yet more drear.

LXIX.

A raven shade, more dark than darkest night,
Cloaked all the hill, enlivened by no ray,
Save now and then dull flashes of blue light,
That made the following gloom yet more dismay:
Slowly at length the blackness cleared away;
The round pale sun shone out, but nothing clear;
Gloomy the earth, the air was aught but gay,
Nor of the palace did one trace appear,
Nor would you venture now, e'en to exclaim, 'twas here.

LXX.

As when the clouds at summer eve have drawn
In air huge towers and temples, they remain
Till wind or sunshine comes, and straight they're gone,
Like a dream figured in the sick man's brain:
So melt the' enchanted towers, with all their train
Of rich delights, and leave but for the eye
The hoary face of nature—the still main,
Brown hills, and frowning woods. Her chariot nigh
She as is usual mounts. and fast away doth fly.

LXXI.

The clouds she cleaves, and round her doth enrol
Thunders and tempests, lightnings, wave, and wind;
The regions subject to the southern pole,
And all their unknown natives left behind,
Calpe she crossed; nor, in her fretful mind,
Stooped to the Spaniard, or the Moor, but o'er
The Midland Sea her winged car inclined;
Nor to the right, nor to the left hand bore,
Till in mid air she reached the known Assyrian shore.

LXXII.

Not now to fair Damascus does she post,
But shuns the aspect of her once dear land,
And guides her chariot to the Dead Sea coast,
Where the strongholds of the Enchantress stand.
Alighting here, she from her duteous band
Of damsels and of pages hides her face,
And, wandering lonely on the sea-beat strand,
Fluctuates from scheme to scheme in doubtful case,
But soon all shame to rage and wished revenge gives place.

LXXIII.

"Yes, hence I will," she cried, "before his swarms
The' Egyptian king shall move in Sion's aid;
Each art react, remuster all my charms,
To every uncouth thing my sex degrade,
That may assist my purpose;—undismayed,
Handle the brand and bow, become the flame
Of the most potent, and direct his blade;
Let me but have the just revenge I claim,
Farewell, vain self-respect! farewell, fond maiden shame!

LXXIV.

"And for the faults I shall hereby commit,
Let my sage guardian blame himself, not me;
He first to thoughts and offices unfit
Set my frail sex and daring spirit free;
He made me first a gadding damsel, he
Spurred on my ardour, loosed me from the rein
Of timorous awe and shame-faced modesty;
His be the guilt of all then that may stain—
All I have done through love, or may do through disdain.'

LXXV.

Thus fixed, she gathered in, on Arab steeds,
Damsels, and knights, and servitors in haste;
And in their sumptuous arms and woman's weeds,
Displayed at once her fortune and fine taste.
Forward she set; and, journeying the wild waste,
Took nor repose by night, nor rest by day,
Till her keen eye along the' horizon traced
The' Egyptian hosts, that in their mailed array
Wide o'er the sunbright sands of antique Gaza lay.

CANTO XVII.

Stanza lviii.

ARGUMENT.

His countless swarms the' Egyptian Prince reviews,
And 'gainst the Croises sends them forth; Armide,
Who, still incensed, Rinaldo's death pursues,
Joins with her train the hosts ere they proceed;
And, with the surer certainty and speed
To wreak her will, presents her charms divine,
In guerdon of revenge; the Hero, freed,
Puts on invulnerable arms, where shine
In bold relief the deeds of his illustrious line.

I.

Upon Judea's confines, on the way
That leads to old Pelusium, Gaza stands;
Built on the shore, it overlooks the bay,
And on the east the bordering tract commands—
A fruitless waste, a solitude of sands,
Which, like the waters of the tossing main,
The breathing whirlwind spreads o'er all the lands;
And scarce the pilgrim can his course maintain,
Against the frequent storm that sweeps the' unstable plain.

II.

The Caliph's frontier city, it had been
Won from the Turk, the fruit of old debates;
And being situate nearest to the scene
Of the vast enterprise he meditates,
The seat of empire hither he translates
From Cairo, bordering on the Red Sea coasts,
His sumptuous Capital: from all his States
The flower of warriors which each province boasts,
He has assembled here, and musters now his hosts.

III.

Muse! to my mind recal those by-gone times;
Say what was then the standing state of things;
What powers the Caliph moved, from what far climes,
What troops of vassals, and what trains of kings;
The hosts, the leaders and the arms he brings
From the wide Orient to the South, rehearse!
Thou, only thou hast power to' unlock the springs
Of antique story, and assist my verse
In arms to venture half the banded universe!

IV.

When from the Grecian Cæsar Egypt first
Rebelled, a warrior from the' Arabian Seer
Sprung, in the same fierce superstition nursed,
Tyrant became, and fixed his kingdom here:
Califfe the chief was called, a name of fear,
And those who after him the sceptre held
Took the same term, as Nile, from year to year,
Her Pharaohs first, then Ptolemies beheld,
Renewed from sire to son, till both this third expelled.

V.

Long years their empire had confirmed, and now
Behold its spacious bounds! it comprehends
Libya, from where the palms of Barca bow,
Cyrene towers, and Marmarica bends;
Thence, passing southward up the Nile, extends
To where in lonely state Syene stands;
And, compassing unpeopled countries, ends
In spicy sweet Sabæa's happy lands,
And where Euphrates winds his way through silent sands.

VI.

To right and left in its embrace it boasts
The rich Red Sea and all its incensed shore,
On to the regions of those Eastern coasts,
Whose suns the Persian did whilere adore:
Much is the kingdom in itself; but more,
Ruled by a king resolving to assert
The ancient honours and renown it bore—
A prince by blood, but more so by desert,
In every warlike art and policy expert.

VII.

Oft 'gainst the Persians, 'gainst the Turks he reared
His flag, assailing or assailed; the same,
Conquering or conquered, save that he appeared
Greater, o'ercome, than when he overcame:
Now, grey with age, he left the toilsome game,
The soldier's hauberk for the caliph's gown,
And sheathed his sabre; but the warrior's flame
Still warmed his heart, nor did he yet lay down
The' ambitious will that grasped at limitless renown.

VIII.

Still through his ministers he wars, and yet
So full of vigorous intellect appears,
That the vast frame of empire seems a weight
Too slight to cumber much his wintry years.
Libya through all her petty kingdoms fears
His nod, and trembles at his naked blade;
Remotest India his decree reveres;
And one and all send tributary aid,
Either in troops, or gold, with prompt submission paid.

IX.

Such was the king who from each Orient realm
Had summoned forth, and now impels the flower
Of his vast forces northward, to o'erwhelm
The conquering Franks, and crush their rising power.
Last comes Armida, in the very hour
Fixed by the king his armies to survey,
Apt for review: apart from tent and tower,
On the vast plain the hosts, at break of day,
Proudly before him pass in orderly array.

X.

High on a sumptuous throne he takes his seat,
Climbed by a hundred ivory steps; his tread
Is upon gold and purple; from the heat,
A spacious sky of silver shades his head;
In glittering interchange of white and red,
Diamond and rubies grace his robes, not spare
Of more barbaric ornaments; instead
Of the gemmed diadem, white linen fair,
Wrapt round in thousand folds, crowns high his reverend hair.

XI.

His right hand holds the sceptre—white as snow
Descends his venerable beard; serene
With some severity, his eyes yet glow
With their first fires, intelligent and keen:
In all his acts the majesty was seen
Of age and empire, majesty that knew
No change of state; perchance with such a mien
Great Phidias sculptured, and Apelles drew
Jove the divine, but Jove as he his thunders threw!

XII.

Near him to right and left two Satraps stand,
Pre-eminent,—the one of most renown
Sustains the sword of justice in his hand,
Unsheathed; the other bears beneath his gown
The' imperial seal, and, counsel to the crown,
Transacts the civil business of the state;
But he who wears a more habitual frown,
Has powers more terrible—high magistrate,
Prince of the hosts, and sworn executor of fate.

XIII.

Below, a standing guard around the throne,
His Mamalukes plant their lances, thick and wide,
Armed not with spears and cuirasses alone,
But long curved sabres pendant at their side.
Thus sate the Tyrant; and at leisure eyed,
From his high station, the collected cloud
Of nations pass: ministrant to his pride,
Low at his feet in passing, the mute crowd
Their ensigns, arms, and plumes in meek devotion bowed.

XIV.

First march the' Egyptian troops, four squadrons, led
Each by a chief; two in her Upper plain
Where heavenly Nile uprises, and two bred
Amidst her Lower regions, a domain
Won by his waters from the salt-sea main,—
Their rich alluvial slime outstretched the shore,
And, settling, formed a fruitful soil for grain;
Thus Egypt grew, and what was sea before,
Is now far inland ground, obnoxious to the oar.

XV.

In the first troop appear the dusky race
Whom the rich plain of Alexandria breeds;
With those who dwell along the coasts that face
The glowing West, a region that succeeds
The Libyan Isthmus; these Araspes leads,
A proud and potent Chief, but less renowned
For hardy valour than for crafty deeds,
In every art of Moorish war profound,
Skilled in false flights to' attack, in ambuscades to wound.

XVI.

Next come the tribes that front the morning star
And Asian coasts; they rank beneath the crest
Of soft Arontes, whom no deeds of war,
But rank and titles raise to some request.
Ne'er has the helm till now his temples pressed;
Nor e'er till now have the shrill serenades
Of morning trumpets broke his pleasant rest;
But fond ambition him at last persuades
To try the soldier's life and leave his native shades.

XVII.

The third that follows seems no single band,
But a vast host; it fills the fields and shores;
You'd think that all the harvests of the land
Were, for such swarms, an insufficient store:
Yet them a single City, ranked before
Whole provinces in strength, wherein reside
Myriads of men—Grand Cairo sends; thence pour
The mighty swarms that pass, troops yet untried
In the debates of war, and Campson is their guide.

XVIII.

Next under Gazel march the men who reap
The grain that in the bordering garden grows
Far up the River, to the lofty steep
O'er which its second cataract foaming flows.
All these Egyptians have but swords and bows;
No helm their heads, no cuirass fortifies
Their breasts, but passing rich their vesture shows,
Which leads the foe in battle to despise
Chance of impending death, in passion for the prize.

XIX.

Next come, half naked and unarmed, the hordes
Of Barca, ranked beneath Alarcon's sway,
Who for long ages with voracious swords
Have ranged the deserts, and sustained by prey
Their famished lives; more civilised than they,
But inexpert in marshalled war, succeed
Those who Zumara's turbaned king obey,
And them from Tripoli; they both exceed
In flying fights, and wound with all a Parthian's speed.

XX.

Then follow those who in Arabia dwell,
The Stony, and the Happy land, which knows
Neither (if true the tales that pilgrims tell)
The' excess of summer heats or winter snows:
Where flourishes the balm, the spikenard blows;
Where dies the' immortal Phœnix to assume
Fresh life, with leaves of myrtle and of rose,
And each diviner plant of sweet perfume,
Building at once her bower, her cradle, and her tomb.

XXI.

With bow and scimetar resembling those
The' Egyptians bear, less dainty is their dress;
Their dark array the Bedouin Arabs close,
Who no fixt region or abodes possess;
But o'er the wild unstable wilderness
Their migratory tents and cities bear,
Perpetual pilgrims; womenlike, not less
Shrill are their voices, short their forms and spare,
Long their wild raven locks, their faces just as fair.

XXII.

Long Indian canes, with iron tipt, they bear,
And upon steeds so nimble sweep along,
You'd say a whirlwind blew them past, if e'er
The wings of whirlwinds had a speed so strong.
Syphax the first undisciplined rude throng
Commands; the next Aldino trains for fight;
The rest to fierce Albiazar belong,
Whom rapine, wounds, and blood alone delight,
A sort of kingly thief—a murderer, not a knight.

XXIII.

Then pass the Islanders with fleecy curls,
Whose homes are compassed by the' Arabian waves;
By whom those shells which breed the Persian pearls
Are dived and fished for, in their Green-Sea caves.
With them are joined a host of sable slaves,
Negroes, along the coasts of Nubia born;
Foremost of those king Agricalt outbraves
The best, while these obey Osmida's horn,
A wretch that mocks at faith, and laughs all law to scorn.

XXIV.

The Isle of Meröe next its Ethiops sends,
Which Nilus there, and Astrabora here
Gird with their waves; three realms it comprehends,
And two religions in its spacious sphere:
Them young Canario leads, and Asimire,
Both monarchs, both Mahometans, and both
The Caliph's tributary friends; but here
The third comes not—the Caliph would be loth
Or to employ his arms, or trust his Christian oath.

XXV.

Two other subject kings, in brave array,
Bring up their archers next, a goodly band;
The first from Ormus, which the Persian bay
Encompasses, a rich luxurious land—
The last from Böecan, whose banks of sand,
The' embracing ocean at high tide sweeps o'er,
And forms an isle; but shortly, from its strand,
When the tide ebbs, men scorn the billows' roar,
And with unmoistened feet pass safe from shore to shore.

XXVI.

Nor could a much-loved wife, great Altamore,
Thee in her happy bridal bed detain;
Her breast she beat, her golden tresses tore,
To stay thy fatal voyage, but in vain.
"Cruel!" she said, "has then the frightful main
A face than mine more lovely or more mild?
And can it seem more pleasant to sustain
The sword and shield with bloody dust defiled,
Than kiss thy consort's cheek, and dance thine infant child?"

XXVII.

He is the king of Samarcand; his crown
Is free, but not in this his glories dwell;
Well versed in arms, his courage and renown
All others' courage and renown excel;
The' unconscious Franks shall know it but too well,
Already have they cause to fear his face:
His soldiers, each rude weapon to repel,
Wear coats of mail, fine helms their temples grace,
Their thighs the sword display, their saddle-bows the mace.

XXVIII.

Lo, next, where fierce Adrastus from far Ind,
Aurora's land, comes frowning! he nor bears
Breastplate nor helm, but for a charm, behind,
A rich green snake-skin streaked with sable wears:
Thus armed, all dangers of the fight he dares;
Upon a monstrous elephant he rides,
His constant wont when he for war prepares;
From this side Ganges he the people guides,
That live where Indus rolls to sea his mighty tides.

XXIX.

Next come the king's own troops, choice warriors, classed
The flower of Memphian chivalry; all those
Who with most honour and renown had passed
Through peace and war, this body-guard compose:
Armed for security and fear, each shows
A barb obedient to his armed heel;
And heaven itself smiles, sparkles, shines, and glows
From their array—as round the field they wheel—
Helm, cuirass, mantle, plume; gems, crimson, gold, and steel.

XXX.

Here rides Alarco fierce, and Odemar,
Marshaller of armies; Idraote, Rimedon,
For proud audacity renowned afar,
Who laughs at death, and veils his plume to none;
Rapoldo, glorious for his murders done,
Corsair and tyrant of the sea; inflamed
Tigranes, Ormond, whom the mighty shun,
And Marlabust Arabicus, surnamed
From the rebellious hordes his sword so oft has tamed.

XXXI.

Orindo, Pirga, Arimon, Brimarte,
Scaler of towns, are here with swift Siphante,
Tamer of steeds; and, of the wrestler's art
Thou the great master, strong Aridamante!
And, foremost upon tower and crag to plant
His standard, thunderbolt of war, severe
Young Tisaphernes! with whom none can vaunt
Like skill in tilt or tourney to career,
On foot the sword to wave, in selle to toss the spear.

XXXII.

A brave Armenian guides them, who in youth,
Unfixed in Christ, Mahometan became;
Then Clement he was called, but from the truth
Departing, Emirene is now his name;
In all besides a man of noble fame,
Dear to the Caliph above all his band
Of Satraps—equal honour may he claim,
Soldier or chief, in action or command,
For wisdom, dauntless heart, and valiant strength of hand.

XXXIII.

All were now passed; when lo! in splendid state
Appears Armida, and her troop displays;
With robes succinct, high on her car she sate,
Armed like the quivered Goddess of the chase.
The new displeasure in her angel face
Mixed with the native sweetness which it wore,
To its fine features gave but sharper grace;
Wounded herself, deep wounds and torments sore
She seems, incensed, to threat, and threatening charms the more.

XXXIV.

Her car, that glorious as Aurora's rolled,
With rubies, pearls, and hyacinths glistered clear;
Four pairs of unicorns, with yokes of gold,
Pass to the rich reins of the charioteer.
A hundred pages and fair girls appear
Near her, whose quivers at their backs resound;
Smart archers all, they o'er the plain career
On milk-white steeds, well practised to wheel round,
And swift with horny hoofs spurn back the' indented ground.

XXXV.

Her army follows, from Damascus sent
By Idraote, and led by Aradine;—
As when the new-born Phœnix makes ascent
To visit the warm realms beneath the Line,
With golden crown, starred wings, and necklace fine
Of all rich feathers—purple, crimson, green,
A sparkling carcanet—her state divine
The world beholds amazed, and round their queen
A crowd of awestruck birds fly, glorying in her sheen.

XXXVI.

So passed Armida, so Armida shined
In habit, gesture, and commanding grace!
Nor was there one so stern and uninclined
To love, but glowed those beauties to embrace.
If she can charm in this her sullen case
Nations so various, in so short a while,
What will she do when with a happy face
She pays court to them in her sweetest style,
Wooes with her radiant eyes, and thrills with her fond smile!

XXXVII.

But when she too in her admired costume
Had passed applauded, and the pageant closed,
The king for Emerino sent, to whom,
Preferred to all his captains, he proposed
To give the sole direction of the host;
Divining his intent the Chief attends,
And with an air that shows him for the post
Well-worthy, comes—the guard asunder rends,
Leaving a midway path, and he the throne ascends.

XXXVIII.

He bows his head, he bends his knee, his hand
Lays on his heart, and thus the king: "To thee
This sceptre, Emirene, to thy command,
I yield these hosts—rule thou in lieu of me;
Setting the subject king of Judah free,
Bear not the sword of my revenge in vain;
Go, see, and conquer! let no Christian be
Saved from the slaughter, or, if some remain,
Let them to me be brought, and fill no gentle chain."

XXXIX.

Thus spoke the Tyrant; and the turbaned Peer,
The sovereign rule accepting, thus replied:
"From thy unconquered hand, blest Sire, I here
The sceptre take, with fortune for my guide!
Strong in thy strength, thy captain, I confide
Herein to' avenge upon the Latin race
All Asia's wrongs; but this let strokes decide;
Ne'er but as victor will I see thy face;
The war our death may bring—it shall not bring disgrace.

XL.

"Heaven grant, if ill (though none indeed I dread)
Should be ordained to trouble our success,
The whole black storm may burst upon my head!
Safe be the host, and its dead leader less
In funeral sorrow than the happiness
Of pomp triumphal home be borne along!"
Thus spake the Chief; and closing his address,
Loud shouts arose from all that mighty throng,
With harsh barbaric sounds from atabal and gong.

XLI.

Midst this wild music and these shouts, the king,
Girt by his brave Circassians, left the throne
For the gay tent, and to rich banqueting
The Chiefs inviting, took his seat alone;
Whence, now rich dainties, now in pleasant tone
He graceful compliments to each addressed,
Not one neglecting; here when all were flown
With mirth, the wine-cup circling with the jest,
Fit space Armida found, her project to digest.

XLII.

But, the feast finished, and all eyes intent
On her fair aspect, she, who clearly read
By well-known signs that to her heart's content
Her pleasing poison in all minds was shed,
Rose, turned towards the king her graceful head,
And, in an attitude 'twixt grief and cheer,
Reverence and inborn haughtiness, thus said;
Studying in voice and gesture to appear,
Much as she could, serene, fierce, generous, and severe.

XLIII.

"I too am come, great king! to dare the worst,
Firm for our faith, our country, and our right;
A Lady, true, but in a palace nursed—
A Princess sure may well become the fight.
Who hopes to rule an empire, should not slight
One brave accomplishment—the self-same hand
Should poise the spear or sceptre; mine shall smite,
(Nor slow, nor torpid to the bow or brand,)
And learn with foeman's blood to fertilise the land.

XLIV.

"Think not that now for the first time the star
Of glory lights me to this noble aim;
That only now I have been prompt by war
To' uphold our laws, and fortify the frame
Of thy vast empire! whether what I name
Be true, or uttered out of vain parade,
Thou shouldst thyself remember—thou my fame
Hast heard—what troops of those who bear displayed
The Redcross, Nobles all, my captive slaves I made:—

XLV.

"They in my snares were taken, were secured,
And as a noble gift to thee were sent,
And might have lain perpetually immured
In thy dark dungeons—such was mine intent—
So hadst thou now gone forth more confident
Of ending, by a glorious victory,
The desperate conflict upon which we 're bent,
Had not Rinaldo, doomed our curse to be,
Slain my appointed guards, and set the prisoners free.

XLVI.

"Who this Rinaldo is, is not unknown;
The world 's but too much pestered with his name;
This is the savage who has overthrown
Our hopes, nor have I yet avenged the shame.
Hence does fierce anger, with just cause, inflame
My rising spirit; hence does it inspire
This my resolve to arms; I am all flame:
For other wrongs I have, but they would tire,
Let what is said suffice; revenge is my desire.

XLVII.

"And I revenge will have! all shafts the skies
Cut not in vain, some work the shooter's will;
And Allah oft his red right hand applies
To dart his bolts against triumphant ill.
But lo! if any will the ruffian kill,
Cut off the head I so much hate to see,
And cast it reeking at my feet, his skill
Shall have my thanks; the vengeance sweet will be
But oh, ten times more sweet, if wrought indeed by me

XLVIII.

"Yes, 'twill be sweet; so sweet, I will resign
What most I prize, what numbers vainly sued,
My crown, my marriage portion, and, in fine,
Myself, if that be the reward he would.
All these I vow, and make my promise good
By the firm oath; all solemnly I swear
Inviolable faith and gratitude
Through life; if any think the proffer fair,
Let him in terms as frank the rising thought declare!"

XLIX.

When thus the Lady had proclaimed her mind,
Adrastus, greedy of her charms, replied;
"Now Heaven forbid thy shafts should be so kind
As to destroy the barbarous homicide!
So base a heart—does it deserve," he cried,
"That thou, fair Amazon, its blood should shed?
Forego the thought! and in my arm confide
To gratify thy wrath, revenge the dead,
And at thy saintly feet to roll his odious head!

L.

"I'll pluck his heart out; to the vultures I
Will, joint by joint, his carcase cast!" thus spoke
The swarthy Indian; but his vaunting high
The gallant Tisaphernes ill could brook:
"And who," he cried, with anger in his look,
"Art thou, who giv'st thyself such gorgeous airs
Before the king, nor fear'st our fierce rebuke?
Look round! here's one perchance at least that dares
Outact thy mighty vaunts, though more his words he spares."

LI.

Quick the fierce Indian answered; "I am one
Whose deeds were never by his words surpassed;
But if elsewhere thy insolence had run
To such excess, the insult were thy last."
And here from threats to blows they soon had passed,
But all repressed the quarrel, and between
Both chiefs the monarch his dread sceptre cast;
Then to Armida said: "Illustrious queen!
Thy soul indeed is great, thy manly courage keen.

LII.

"Worthy thou art that these abase their pride
To thee, and in the sweet abasement joy;
That thou hereafter mayst their sabres guide
With surer aim, that felon to destroy;
There let both chiefs their chivalry employ,
And in a happier field their worth contest:"
This said, the monarch ceased; they, nothing coy,
Offer again on scorned Rinaldo's crest
To prove whose sworded arm shall wreak her vengeance best.

LIII.

Nor these alone; but all the heroes there
Renowned in war, ambitious of her bed,
Offer with vaunts their services,—all swear
To take revenge on his accursed head.
So many arms she moved! such hatreds bred
Against the knight whom late her tender love
Wooed with all sweets! but he, since first he fled
The' enchanted isle, and the blue ocean clove,
Swiftly before the wind with all good omens drove.

LIV.

In the same track that it before had ploughed,
The charmed gondola is homeward borne;
And every air that sings in sail and shroud,
With equal kindness speeds its gay return:
The youth now marks, stretched pensive at the stern,
The Pleiads smile, the misty Hyads weep;
Now round the Pole the Bears slow wheeling turn;
And now, as twilight tints cascade and steep,
The rocks whose umber woods o'erhang the shaded deep.

LV.

Now of the Camp, of foreign nations now,
The various customs he inquires, and weighs;
And thus the briny seas they ceaseless plough,
Three starry nights, and three sunshiny days.
But when the fourth calm sun with farewell rays
Far o'er the waters of the west descends,
The grounding vessel its swift motion stays;
Then spoke the damsel; "Palestine, my friends,
Is won! your voyage here, and here my duty ends."

LVI.

She set the knights ashore, and disappeared,
Ere they could take farewell, or say, she 's gone!
Meanwhile the Night her sable standard reared,
All hues and objects mingling into one.
Long o'er those waste sands, through the twilight dun,
The knights gazed anxious to discern some ray
From tower or cottage-shed, but light was none;
Nor step of man, nor tract of beast astray,
Nor aught beside was seen that might direct their way.

LVII.

Forward at length they move, and when the dash
Of breaking billows on the shingles rolled
Melts from their ear, far off a sudden flash
Of something radiant may their eyes behold;
Which, with mild silver rays and gleams of gold
Making the lone night beautiful, withdraws
The shadowy screen that had before controlled
Their confidence and cheer; they make no pause,
But to the light advance, and soon perceive the cause.

LVIII.

Arms newly forged they see, to a tall elm
Against the rising moon suspended high,
Whence sparkling gems, upon the gilded helm
And mail, shed fire as from a starlight sky:
Near as they draw, much rich-wrought imagery,
Footmen, and knights that on war-horses ride,
On the vast shield emblazoned they descry;
An aged watchman sat the arms beside,
Who to receive them rose, when their approach he spied.

LIX.

Well the two warriors knew the ancient face
For that of their wise host and courteous friend;
He straight received them with a warm embrace,
And when their mutual courtesies had end,
Turned to the Youth, who silent seemed to send
To the tall form he reverenced and admired,
An asking eye, and greeting said; "Attend,
My son! thee solely in this place retired
I wait, and much to see thy aspect have desired.

LX.

"For know, I am thy friend, and for thy good
How truly I have cared, inquire of these;
Who, taught by me, the' enchantments have subdued
That bound thy life up in voluptuous ease.
Mark now my heavenly precept, which agrees
With perfect bliss, though adverse to the smooth
Seducing siren's; let it not displease,
But keep it well in mind, till in the truth
A wiser, holier tongue instruct thine erring youth.

LXI.

"Not underneath green shades, by fountains snrill,
Amidst the nymphs and syrens, fruits and flowers,
Is placed our bliss, but on the steep rough hill
Of virtue, climbed through sunshine, snow and showers;
He that, embosomed in Idalian bowers,
Treads but gay Pleasure's primrose path, will ne'er
Reach the high crown; the royal eagle towers
Round the steep cliff, and thou, wilt thou forbear
To spurn the lowly vale, and fix thine eyrie there?

LXII.

"Nature has given thee elevated thought,
Nature has raised thy face toward the skies,
That thou shouldst look erect, and by well-wrought
Heroic deeds to loftiest glory rise:
Nature has given thee ardent sympathies,
And a brisk wrath, not on each slight pretence
To waste in civil broils, nor yet, unwise,
To be the ministers of appetence,
And every loose delight discordant to good sense:

LXIII.

"But that thy valour, by these passions armed,
With more success thy outward foes may quell;
And check the lusts with which the heart is charmed,
When the strong demons in the blood rebel:
The wise man governs and applies them well
Each to the proper end for which 'tis plain
They were assigned,—now bids them sink, now swell,
As intellectual Reason does ordain,
Prompt to impel them now, now cautious to restrain."

LXIV.

Thus spake the Senior; the hushed youth, intent,
Stored in his grateful memory all he said,
And, conscious of his errors, meekly bent
His eyes to earth, with cheeks all rosy red.
Well marked the Sage the sweet confusion spread,
Well guessed the secret sentiments that rolled
Across his mind, and added; "Raise thy head;
And in this sculptured shield, my son, behold
What thy illustrious sires achieved in days of old.

LXV.

"Of thy dead ancestors the long bright track
Shall be revealed thee in this desert place,
Whilst thou, degenerate loiterer, hangest back,
Nor stirr'st a step in glory's ardent race!
Arouse thyself; up! up! thy spirit brace;
Let what I here point out to thee, incite
Thy slumbering valour, their renown to grace."
Thus spoke the Sage; and, as he spoke, the knight
Fixed on the pictured shield his keen perusing sight.

LXVI.

The learned sculptor, with a master's hand,
In narrow field unnumbered forms had done;
Here all the race of glorious Azzo stand,
In long unbroken order, sire and son.
The pure unspotted streams were seen to run
From the old Roman source in ancient days;
The Lords stand crowned with laurel; one by one,
The hoary Sage selects them, and displays
Their wars and glorious deeds, and points his speech with praise.

LXVII.

He showed him Caius, when to foreign foes
The nodding Empire first became a prey,
As the first prince of Esté, fairly chose
By a glad people, proud his will to' obey;
And how the weaker neighbouring states each day
Flocked to his wing for safety; how he bore
O'er them free rule; and, when by his weak sway
Honorius called the Goths, to make once more
The bold and bloody march which they had made before;—

LXVIII.

And when all Italy appeared in flame
From their barbaric torch, and weeping Rome,
A slave and prisoner, mourned her perished fame,
And feared the dreadful trumpet of her doom,
How well Aurelius, in that hour of gloom,
Preserved his vassals wholly unenslaved;
Then how, distinguished by his lofty plume,
The bold Foresto resolutely braved
The Hun whose barbarous flag Italian breezes waved.

LXIX.

By his grim aspect Attila was known,
His eyes like dragons' flashing through the dark;
With his dog's visage who beheld him frown,
Would soothly swear they heard him snarl and bark:
Then, foiled in duel, you the man might mark
Steal off amidst his train, in shame and rage,—
And how from Aquileia's towers, the ark
Of Roman liberty, Foresto sage
Rolled back the storm of war, the Hector of his age.

LXX.

He fell, and half the fabric with him fell
Of his loved country! Acarine, his son,
Built up the breaches, and defended well
The' Italian bulwarks, as his sire had done:
To the strong Fates, not to the savage Hun,
He yielded up Altino, soon renewed
Upon a safer site,—he joined in one
A thousand scattered seats and hamlets rude,
Where through a fruitful vale his course the Po pursued.

LXXI.

With walls he banked it, in all points complete,
Strong to withstand the' o'erflowing river's rage;
Thus rose the city doomed to be the seat
Of Esté's princes in a later age:
Drawn is he driving from his heritage
The savage Alans; next, with crimson glaive,
Venturing with Odoacer to engage,
He dies for Italy; what fate more brave,
Than thus to share at once his sire's renown and grave!

LXXII.

With him fell Alphorisio; Azzo sad
With his dear brother into exile goes,
Soon to return with arms and counsel, glad
The tyrant's power hath found a timely close.
Near him, an arrow in his eyeball, shews
Esté's Epaminondas, he who sealed
With blood his patriot vows! he in the throes
Of doom dies happy, since from the red field
Fierce Totila is fled, and saved his darling shield.

LXXIII.

Of Boniface I sing: his boyish son,
Valerian, follows in his steps; his brand,
And his already manly arm, not one
Of all the Gothic squadrons dare withstand.
Near, of ferocious aspect, sword in hand,
Sculptured is bold Ernesto, cap-a-pee,
Smiting the wild Sclavonians from the land;
Then comes the' intrepid Aldoardo, he
Who shut the Lombard king from fair Montselice.

LXXIV.

Henry was there, with Berenger, whose might,
When Charlemagne his flag august displayed,
Was still seen foremost in the ranks of fight,
Whether he ruled the squadron, or obeyed.
Him Lewis followed,—he from friendly made
Adverse, against that nephew who the throne
Of Italy possessed, bold battle weighed,—
Conquered, and took him captive; next was shown
Otho, by his five sons indisputably known.

LXXV.

Here shines Almerico, first Marquis styled
Of that fair City, Princess of the Po;
His musing attitude, and glances mild
To heaven upraised, his pious spirit show,
Founder of churches and of shrines; but lo,
In other mood the second Azzo wars
With Berengarius, his immortal foe!
Who, after various turns of fate, withdraws,
O'ercome, and Azzo gives the' Italian cities laws.

LXXVI.

Albert, his son, in Germany maintains
His fame; his chivalry is voiced so wide,
From warring, conquering, tilting with the Danes,
That Otho wooes his daughter for a bride,
With a large dowry; next him, is descried
The gallant Ugo with his waving crest,
Whose valour tamed the horns of Roman pride;
He, Marquis now of Italy addressed,
Beneath his guardian care all Tuscany possessed.

LXXVII.

The eye Tebaldo, next, and Boniface
Close by his Beatrice's side, engage;
Then no male heir of the illustrious race
Lives to enjoy the extensive heritage.
Matilda follows, who in sex and age
Well that defect supplied by her renown
And hardy deeds; fair, brave, discreet, and sage,
Beyond the golden sceptre, throne, and crown,
She had the power to' advance the wimple, coif, and gown.

LXXVIII.

A manlike spirit sparkled in her eye,
A more than manlike courage armed her look;
The Normans beat, she forced their chief to fly,
Guiscard, who ne'er before the field forsook;
Here the fourth Henry broke, his standard took,
And with the spoil the solemn temple graced;
And there the Pontiff who the thunders shook
Of the dread Vatican, his pride abased,
In high Saint Peter's chair with dignity replaced.

LXXIX.

Now at her side, now seconding her views,
With looks of reverence and of love, is seen
Azzo the Fifth; but, blest with all kind dews,
From the fourth Azzo's stock upshooting green,
Yet happier branches beautify the scene;
Lo, where to Germany Lord Guelpho goes!
(Guelpho, his son, by Cunigond his queen);
Thus in Bavarian fields, transplanted, grows
The good old Roman graft that in Ferrara rose.

LXXX.

There with this Estéan branch the Guelphic tree
Engraft, revives, as it was waxing old;
Now in its scions you the Guelphs might see
Renew their sceptres, stars, and crowns of gold,
Brighter than ever; whilst each orb that rolled
In heaven, its fairest rays and aspects shed;
So that it flourished still, and, uncontrolled,
Towered till the heavens themselves confined its head,
Which half the spacious land with fruit and shade o'erspread.

LXXXI.

Nor less luxuriantly the royal stem
Flowered in the' Italian boughs; Bertoldo here
Shot forth, confronting Guelpho, and with them
Azzo the Sixth renewed the glories clear
Of his great sires:—thus animate appear
Upon the breathing shield, in long array,
These forms, to Fame and to Rinaldo dear;
A thousand sparks of pride that fond survey
Struck forth, that in the wreck of honour latent lay.

LXXXII.

And, for the like divine renown ablaze,
Their gallant actions so transport his brain,
That he already in his mind portrays
The city conquered, and the people slain;
All seems presented palpably and plain
Before him,—the stormed towers, the rending walls;
He snatches up the arms in ardent vein,
And, almost fancying that the trumpet calls,
With wing'd aspiring hopes the victory far forestals.

LXXXIII.

Then Charles, who had related long before
The Danish Prince's death, with frank address
The sword presented which Prince Sweno wore,—
"Take it," he said, "and with it good success!
With just and pious sentiments, no less
Than a brave hand employ it, sound and strong,
In Christ's good cause; may he thine efforts bless
And thou avenge its former master's wrong,
Who waits it at thy hands, who loved thy virtues long!"

LXXXIV.

"God grant," the knight replied, "for his dear sake,
Since of his sword thus happily possessed,
That I indeed may full requital take,
And duly thus fulfil his last request!"
Charles, overjoyed, in brief his thanks expressed,
And added tributes of affection paid;
But here the Sage, with the desire impressed
To expedite their course, stept in, and prayed
That their return might now no longer he delayed.

LXXXV.

"High time it is," he said, "that you prepare
To reach the army; you will not arrive
Unlooked for,—come then, through the dusky air
Trust to my guidance, safely will I drive."
He said: his words their eagerness revive;
They climb the car, and take their seats; this done,
He cheers his coursers to the lash, which strive,
Curving their necks, each other to outrun,
And shapes their rapid course to meet the morning sun.

LXXXVI.

Through the brown darkness of the night serene
Thus they rode on, with deep reflection mute!
When the Sage spoke: "Thou of thy race hast seen
The various boughs, and traced them to their root;
Yet fancy not, because that ancient shoot
Has thriven so fully in its morn of May,
The fruitful mother of heroic fruit,
That through old age it ever will decay,
And want or fruit or flower, to grace a verdant spray.

LXXXVII.

"O that, as I thy elder sires have drawn
Forth from the Gothic gloom of antique night,
I could the figures of thy sons unborn
Paint on the shield, with hues as clear and bright!
That, ere they ope their eyelids to the light,
I could their triumphs to the world resound!
Then shouldst thou see, with all a sire's delight,
A host of future heroes crowd around,
Their series no less long, their deeds no less renowned.

LXXXVIII.

"But my skill serves not of itself to mark
A ray of truth from out the future shine,
Other than dim and dubious, as the spark
Of a far taper in a misty mine:
Yet, if some tidings of thy future line
In certainty I give, without disguise,
Call it not bold; for what I thus divine
Is learned from One before whose vision lies,
Clear and unveiled, the scenes and secrets of the skies.

LXXXIX.

"What God's pure light to him, and he to me
Has shewn, as freely I to thee relate;
Nor Gentile, Greek, nor Latin progeny,
Or in these times, or those of elder date,
E'er teemed with heroes of such noble state
As Heaven, in its high favour, does foredoom
To thee and thine; nor may the good and great
In Sparta, Carthage, Macedon, or Rome,
To match their glorious fame or majesty presume.

XC.

"But far o'er others shall Alphonso shine,
In title second, but the first in worth;
When for illustrious men the world shall pine,
Old and corrupted, shall this prince have birth:
None, in those days of darkness and of dearth,
Shall better sway the sword or sceptre bright;
None with his wisdom so enlighten earth,
Charm in the Court, or fulmine in the fight;
Thy seed's ascendant pride, his age's guiding light!

XCI.

"Whilst yet a youth, he shall give pregnant signs
Of manhood,—prince in each gymnastic play;
Scourge of wild beasts mid mountain peaks and pines;
Graced, at all solemn tilts and tourneys gay,
With the first shouts and favours of the day;
And when to actual warfare he shall pass,
Rich spoils and palms victorious bear away:
And for brave deeds, writ down in breathing brass,
Wear many a votive crown of laurel, oak, and grass.

XCII.

"The equal glory of his riper age
Shall be to' establish peace and calm repose;
To keep his cities tranquil, from the rage
And powerful influence of surrounding foes;
To foster genius, ignorance to depose,
The arts encourage, his fond Court present
With joyous pageants, plays, and splendid shows;
Deal with just hand reward and punishment,
Evils uncome foresee, and seen, with ease prevent.

XCIII.

"And oh, if e'er against the race whose crimes
The' infested seas and ravaged shores pollute,—
Tyrants that force in those unhappy times
Illumined nations humbly to make suit
To them for peace,—he march to execute
Justice for fanes down-tumbled, treasure wrecked,
And violated shrines, in that dispute
What heavy vengeance may they not expect
On the barbarian king and his accursed sect!

XCIV.

"In vain the Turk against his marshalled ranks,
In vain the Moor might muster band on band;
For far beyond Euphrates' willowed banks,
The snows of Taurus, and the happy land
Where dwells perpetual sunshine, would his hand
Advance the Golden Lilies, loose the wing
Of the White Eagle, the furled Cross expand,
And, by due baptism of each Negro king,
Compel imperial Nile to shew his secret spring!"

XCV.

Thus spoke the Senior; the rapt youth took heed
Of all he uttered, and with transport fed
On the fair promise of his future seed,
Which o'er his mind a sweet sereneness shed.
Meanwhile before the break of morn fast fled
The twilight hours; Aurora, dropping dew,
Advanced, and touched the heavens with rosy red;
And now the trembling of the flags that flew
On the high tents far-off, distinctly met their view.

XCVI.

Then thus again the Sage: "These shadows brown
See how the sun disperses! and displays
The tents, the plain, the mountains, and the town,
With the kind comment of his grateful rays!
O'er unknown tracks, by unobstructed ways,
Safe, without danger or delay, nor slow,
Here have I brought you; you yourselves may trace
Your onward way, nor fear a single foe;
Thus then we part; farewell! no farther must I go."

XCVII.

Embracing, they depart; and straight pursue
On foot their journey with the crimson cloud
That, floating eastward, a rich radiance threw
On tent, and silent crag, and rampart proud.
Fame flew before them, and divulged aloud
The Barons' wished arrival; wide and fleet
The news was borne amidst the cheering crowd;
Godfrey, thus advertised, his ducal seat
Left, and with stately step went forth the youth to meet.

—•—

CANTO XVIII.

Stanza xxx.

ARGUMENT.

His errors first the good Rinaldo mourns,
Then seeks the' enchanted wood,—the spirits fly
Before him; Godfrey by a courier learns
Of the Egyptian host, which now draws nigh,
Important tidings; yet the dexterous spy,
Vafrino, goes to' inspect it: sharp the fight
Waxes round Sion, but the hierarchy
Of Heaven so aids the flushed Crusaders' might,
That soon their banners float on each bombarded height.

I.

ARRIVED where Godfrey to salute him stood,
Rinaldo spoke: "Revengeful discontent
And jealous honour spurred me to my feud
With dead Gernando, which I much repent;
And 't is with sorrow still for that event
And thy displeasure that I seek thy face;
Now at the instance of thine envoys sent
For my recal, I come, the stain to' efface
By whatsoe'er good deeds may win me back thy grace."

II.

Low as he kneeled before him Godfrey cast
His arms around his neck, and kindly said;
"No more revive the melancholy past;
In peace repose the memory of the dead!
And no amends I seek for frenzy fled,
Than that thy wonted valour be renewed,—
That, for the ruin of the foe, thou tread
Enchanted ground, and, for the general good,
From spells and monsters free the' inviolable wood.

III.

"That immemorial forest whence of late
We drew our timbers, is defended now,
I know not from what cause, by charms innate,
Deep, strong, and dreadful to the boldest brow;
Nor is there one that dares disturb a bough,
Much less a single sapling of the grove
Touch with the axe; yet without engines, how
Can we the city take? yea! risks which move
To fear our stoutest hearts, will now thy courage prove."

IV.

The youth accepts the risk and toil, without
Much protestation, but with an address
So full of dignity, that none can doubt
From his laconic speech his sure success.
Then to his other noble friends that press
Affectionately near him, he bestows
His courteous hand; and now with cheerfulness
Embraces Guelpho, Tancred now, and throws
Kind nods to all the chiefs that round his person close.

V.

When many a welcome, many a dear embrace
He to the sovereign princes had bestowed,
With like familiar love and gentle grace
He took the greetings of the inferior crowd:
With martial shouts these testified aloud
Their joy, and thronged as thickly to his side,
As if, by elephants or leopards proud
Drawn in high triumph, he had tamed the pride
Of all the realms through which the Nile and Ganges glide.

VI.

Thus hailed, to his pavilion he retires,
And entertains his dearest friends around;
And much to them replies, and much inquires
Both of the war and of the charmed ground.
But when, all leaving him, the Hermit found
Leisure for serious talk, he spoke, and said;
"Great things are those, young Voyager renowned,
Which to thy pilgrim eyes have been displayed,
And long the wondrous tract o'er which thy steps have strayed!

VII.

"How great thy debt to the Celestial King,
Who thus redeems thee from the charmer's den!
Nor spares, with all a shepherd's love, to bring
Back the lost lamb into his holy pen;
That now, by Godfrey's voice, he makes again
Thee second agent in his high design!
Yet art thou changed; not pure of heart, as when
Thou last waged war, and, lain so long supine,
Thou mayst not yet engage in service so divine.

VIII.

"Darkness, the world, the flesh, spiritual sin
With such infectious stains thy soul defile,
No earthly spring can wash thy conscience clean,
The streams of Ganges, or the floods of Nile.
The secret source of what in thee is vile
Heaven's grace alone can fitly purge away;
Turn to thy Saviour then, in lowly style
Ask for forgiveness, all thy sins display,
Cling to the Cross in faith, weep, tremble, praise, and pray."

IX.

He said; and first the youth bewailed his fall,
His amorous follies, and fierce wrath; then kneeled
Contritely at the Hermit's feet, and all
His youthful crimes and levities revealed.
This done, the minister of Heaven repealed
His sins, and absolution gave; then said,—
"Seek now, by prayer to have thy pardon sealed,
When next the morning o'er the world is spread,
The hill that on the East rears high its reverend head.

X.

"Then to the haunted Forest march, where dwell
Such frightful phantoms and gigantic things;
Thou wilt, I know, those fiends and furies quell,
If no fresh error thy tuned soul unstrings.
Let no strange voice that mourns, or sweetly sings,
No smile of ruby lips or radiant eyes
Steal to thy heart and touch fond pity's springs
With their bewitching beauty, but despise
All their fond aspects feigned, false tears, and fancied cries."

XI.

Thus the Sage counsels, and the ardent knight
Prepares with hope for the sublime emprise;
Thoughtful he spends the day, and sad the night,
And ere the breaking morn begins to rise,
Girds on his beautiful bright arms; applies
The falchion to his side, and o'er his mail
Throws a new mantle prankt with rarest dyes;
Leaves the warm friends that, as he passes, veil
Their plumes, and all alone treads slow the silent dale.

XII.

It was the hour when, grieving to be gone,
Night on the confines of the day still slept;
The East grew rosy with the flame of morn,
Yet still some stars her radiant portal kept.
When, as to Olivet the sward he swept,
And as his serious eyes, to heaven inclined,
Marked, with the spangling tears which Night had wept,
The incorruptible pure lights that shined
On high,—to solemn thoughts he gave his musing mind.

XIII.

"O," to himself he thought, "how many bright
And glorious fires heaven's vaulted temple fret!
Day has his car, her golden stars the Night,
And the round silver moon, more radiant yet.
But we, nor these nor those revering, set
On the pale meteors which a flashing eye,
A brilliant smile, or glowing canzonet,
Strike from the twilight of our transient sky,
Our inconsiderate hearts,—gaze, grieve, admire, and die!"

XIV.

And musing thus, awed, melted, and abased,
He reached the summit clothed with mountain thyme;
Above the heaven of heavens his thoughts were raised,
And thus, his face turned to the Orient clime,
Kneeling, he prayed; "The errors of my prime,
O holy Father! in thy mercy, view
With the mild eye of clemency; sublime
My low desires; the evil seed subdue;
And in my soul be pleased thine image to renew!"

XV.

Thus as he prayed, with blushing roses crowned
The radiant Morn appears; which with its sheen
His helm, his arms, and all the mountain round
At once illumed, and golden turned the green.
Fresh on his bosom and bent brow serene,
He felt the spirit of that peaceful hour,
Fanned with its wing; whilst o'er his head unseen,
Shook from Aurora's lap, distilled a shower
Of dew more pure than e'er bespangled blade or bower.

XVI.

The dew celestial on his garments fell,
Which showed as ashes to a tint so bright;
Illumined so, they look no longer pale,
But change their colour to a shining white.
So the scorched summer flowers, at morning light
Steeped in fresh dews, their withered bells unfold,
With added beauty; so, to the delight
Of a new youth returned, after long cold,
The joyful snake shines out, new flourished o'er with gold.

XVII.

The lively whiteness of his altered vest,
Seen by himself, he ceased not to admire;
Then to the old gray forest swift he pressed,
With a firm boldness and sublime desire.
He reached that bosky wilderness of brier
And bough, the sight alone whereof dismayed,
And forced less valiant champions to retire;
Yet saw he nothing in the wood, that made
So much a frightful gloom, as a delightful shade.

XVIII.

He passes onward—the charm works; a sound
Sweet as the air of paradise upsprings;
Hoarse roars the shallow brook; the leaves around,
Sigh to the fluttering of the light wind's wings;
Her ravishing sweet dirge the cygnet sings,
Loud mourn the answering nightingales; sad shells,
Flutes, human voices tuned to golden strings,
And the loud surging organ's glorious swells,—
Such and so various sounds one single sound expels.

XIX.

He was expecting, like the rest, to meet
The strange wild groans and thunders of dismay,
And lo, a symphony of sirens sweet,
Birds, winds, and waters, for his pleasure play!
Wondering he checks his steps—they melt away,
And on he walks, but circumspect and slow;
And nought occurs to interrupt his way,
But a transparent flood, whose waters go
Through the green wood, serene and silent in their flow.

XX.

Flowers and choice odours richly smiled and smelled,
On either side of the calm stream, which wound
In a so spacious circle, that it held
The whole vast forest in its charming round;
Nor only with green bowers and garlands crowned
The compass in its keep—a streamlet strayed
Through this sweet isle, enlivening all the ground;
A most delightful interchange they made;
The mild wave bathes the woods, the woods the wave o'ershade.

XXI.

Whilst he roved round to find a ford, behold,
A wondrous passage to his wish appeared!
An exquisite rich bridge of shining gold
Spanned the pure waves, on stable arches reared;
The golden bridge he passed, the water cleared,
But had no sooner touched the farther shore,
Than the whole glorious fabric disappeared;
And the sweet river, so serene before,
To a vast torrent swelled, that stunned him with its roar.

XXII.

He turns his face, and sees it swoln and spread,
Like a strong flood increased by melting snows:
And, whirling round as to its fountain head,
A thousand rapid curls and gulfs it shows;
But, curious of new objects, on he goes
Through the brown arches thick of aged trees,
That now on every side his steps enclose;
And in these savage glooms, to strike or please,
At every strange new turn, some strange new wonder sees.

XXIII.

Where'er he plants his foot some charm springs out,
The wild brook warbles, or the sweet turf flowers;
There lilies open, here young roses sprout,
There the shrill fountain falls in silver showers;
And round, o'erhead, the' austere and aged bowers
Renew their youth—the hoary bark is seen
To soften, the moss falls, the grey trunk towers,
Each bough its buds, each leaf renews its green—
Mild shines the summer sun, and decks the' enchanted scene.

XXIV.

Impearled with manna was each fresh leaf nigh;
Honey and golden gums the rude trunks weep;
Again is heard that strange wild harmony
Of songs and sorrows, plaintive, mild, and deep;
But the sweet choirs that still such tenor keep
With the swans, winds, and waves, no ear can trace
To their concealed abode in shade or steep;
Nor harp, nor horn, nor form of human face,
Look where he would, was seen in all the shady place.

XXV.

Whilst his eye wanders, and his mind denies
Trust to the truths his charm'd ear recommends,
He sees far-off a wondrous myrtle rise,
Where in a spacious plain the pathway ends;
To this he walks; its boughs the plant extends
Wide as the choice tree of Dodonian Jove—
O'er pine, and palm, and cypress it ascends;
And, towering thus all other trees above,
Looks like the' elected queen and genius of the grove.

XXVI.

Scarce had the hero reached the spacious field
Than stranger novelties his eye arrest;
He sees an oak, self-aided, cleave, and yield
Spontaneous offspring from its fruitful breast:
A full-grown nymph, in gown and turban drest,
On whose ripe cheek celestial beauty blooms,
Oh wonder! issues from that hoary chest;
A hundred other girls from sylvan wombs
A hundred others child amidst the circling glooms.

XXVII.

As the stage shows, or as we painted see
The sylvan Goddess, with her white arms bare,
With hunting weeds tucked up above the knee,
Buskins of blue, and loose luxuriant hair—
Just such, to all appearance, are the fair
Fictitious daughters of these wild-woods old;
Save that for horns, to wake some sprightlier air,
Quivers, and bended bows, they in their hold
Have viols, lutes, and harps, of ivory, pearl, and gold.

XXVIII.

Ranging themselves into a ring, their hands
They knit together, and with joyous cheer
Dance round about Rinaldo as he stands
The willing centre of this moving sphere:
The tree they compass too, and carol clear,
As in light morrice to the charm they move;
"Welcome, thrice welcome, gallant chevalier!"
They sing, "our Lady's hope, our Lady's love;
In blessed hour all hail to this delightful grove!

[14] It was a frequent custom with the Greeks, to enclose their most admirable statues in images of Sileni, for the purpose of preserving them, and

XXIX.

"Timely thou com'st to cure her, wounded sore
With amorous thoughts and languishing desires;
These groves, so dark and desolate before,
Her grief's fit dwelling, choked with thorns and briers,
Lo, at thy coming what quick joy inspires
Each tree and leafy bough! how redolent
They breathe, dressed freshly in their green attires!"
Such was the song, and from the myrtle went
First a melodious sound, and then the sylvan rent.

XXX.

A rude Silenus oft the days of old
Have seen unclose, and yield some Goddess fair,[14]
But never yet did sylvan image hold
Charms such as issued from the myrtle rare:
For forth a Lady stept with golden hair,
With angel beauty, angel mien and grace;
In whom, albeit of visionary air,
Rinaldo starts Armida's form to trace,
The same expressive eye, fond smile, and radiant face.

XXXI.

Sorrow and joy into her looks she cast,
A thousand passions, which one glance betrays;
"And art thou then indeed returned at last
To thy forsaken love," she pensive says;
"Why com'st thou hither, my belov'd? to raise
My drooping soul, and with remembered charms
Solace my widowed nights and lonely days?
Or to wage war, and scare me with alarms?
Why hide thy lovely face? why show these threatening arms?

XXXII.

"Com'st thou a foe or friend? I did not rear
That glorious bridge to entertain my foe;
Unlocked not brooks, flowers, fountains, made not clear
For him that wilderness of brambles—no!
Take now, take off this horrid helmet, shew
Thy face for friendly, glad me with the shine
Of those celestial eyes; say, why so slow?
Kiss me, embrace me, oh my love! I pine;
Or press at least once more my cold, cold hand in thine."

partly perhaps to set off by contrast the wonderful grace of the included divinity.—See Plato's "Alcibiades," in Works, Bohn's Edition, vol. iii., p. 564.

XXXIII.

Thus as she wooes, her beautiful bright eyes
Rueful she rolls, and pale as death appears;
Feigning, with every tear, the sweetest sighs,
And melancholy moans, and bashful fears.
It might have moved a heart of stone to tears,
To hear how fondly she herself deplored;
But he, unmoved by all he sees and hears,
Cautious, not cruel, to the plaints she poured
No longer pays regard, but draws his fatal sword.

XXXIV.

The myrtle he approached; but she with fright
The dear trunk clasping, interposed, and cried;
"Mercy, ah mercy! do me not such spite,
As to cut down my myrtle-tree, the pride
And last poor solace of forlorn Armide;
Put up thy sword, O consort most unkind!
Or sheathe it, cruel, in thy lady's side;
For through this only shall it passage find,
To strike my lovely tree and hurt its hallowed rind!"

XXXV.

Deaf to her prayers, he rears his sword, and she
Transforms herself as swift; as when at night
Our dreams, ne'er constant to the thing we see,
Shift the fond object we had first in sight;
Gross grew her members, dark her face, upright
Her horrent hair; gone by are all her charms,
White breast and rosy cheek,—enlarged in height,
A giantess, she glows with feigned alarms,
Like fell Briareus, limbed with full one hundred arms.

XXXVI.

With fifty swords she fought; on fifty shields
She clashed defiance, blustered, roared, and brayed;
Each other nymph the like weird weapons wields,
A frowning Cyclop, a gigantic Shade;
He feared them not, but with his waving blade
On the charmed myrtle multiplied his blows,
Which at each stroke distressful moanings made;
Air seemed a hell in hubbub, awful shows
Thronged the black sky, and ghosts in swarms on swarms arose.

XXXVII.

Thundered the flashing heavens above, the ground
Groaned underneath,—that bellowed, and this shook:
While the loosed winds and tempests blustering round,
Blew the sharp sleet and hailstones in his look;
Yet not for this the knight his post forsook,
His aim he missed not, changed not in his cheer,
But the more fiercely for their fury strook;—
'T is done! the myrtle falls; the' enchantments drear
Flit with the ended spell; the phantoms disappear.

XXXVIII.

Air still, the heavens serene, the woods resume
Their wonted quiet and sequestered state;
Not terrible, nor cheerful, full of gloom
From palm and cypress, but a gloom innate.
The Victor tries again if as of late
Aught yet forbade the felling of the trees,
And finding nothing check his sword, sedate
Smiles and says inly; "O vain semblances!
O fools, to be deterred by shadows false as these!"

XXXIX.

Then to the camp he turns; meanwhile aware
Of these events, the solitary Seer
Exclaimed: "The charm is o'er, the forest fair
Of evil spirits, and the victor near;
See where he comes!" and now distinguished clear
In his pure mantle from afar, the knight
Struck the spectators with a holy fear;
For the spread pinions of his eagle white
In the clear sunshine shone with unaccustomed light.

XL.

With glad huzzas for victory achieved
Rang the wide hills around, and skies above;
The conquering knight by Godfrey is received
With praise unmixed by envy, and with love.
"Sire," said Rinaldo, "to the dreadful grove,
As you desired, I went; the sprites impure
I saw—I saw and conquered them; improve
The' occasion then, the ways are quite secure,
Send then the workmen forth, the timbers to procure."

XLI.

Straight to the aged woods they went, and hewed
What Art thought proper for the task in hand;
The first artificers in skill were rude,
And little did machinery understand:
But now a noble mechanician planned
The important works, selected well the trees,
And every movement of the workmen scanned,—
William—who lately with his Genoese
Roved the Levantine waves, sole Signior of the seas.

XLII.

But, forced before the' Egyptian fleet at length
His azure kingdom of the sea to quit,
He to the Camp transferred his naval strength;—
To frame such works was never man more fit;
For an ingenious brain, a fruitful wit,
Industrious hand and scientific mind,
To him almost might Dædalus submit;
A hundred meaner architects combined
To execute the schemes his genius now designed.

XLIII.

He undertook to build, not vines alone,
Balistæ, rams, and catapults, of power
To batter down defended walls of stone,
And on high bulwarks rain an arrowy shower,
But, planked with pine and fir, a wondrous tower,
The masterpiece of art; and, to provide
Against the' adhesive flames that might devour
The timbers else, he lined it well outside
With fire-proof skins of sheep and quilts of tough bull-hide.

XLIV.

The separate beams and timbers, mortised tight,
Are joined, completed is the pile; below,
Swings the vast ram, which with its horned might
Threats at each stroke the city to o'erthrow;
Its waist lets down a bridge, which falling slow,
Worked by a windlass, joins the' opposing wall,
And forms an instant passage to the foe;
Whilst from the top a second tower less tall,
Inly concealed, at need shoots up o'ergazing all.

XLV.

With little cost of toil the' enormous mass
Upon its hundred wheels volubil rolled,
Though bearing, armed in brigandine of brass,
A little army in its spacious hold;
Round stood the soldiers, marvelling to behold
With what consummate ease the workmen plied
Their several tasks; much they their skill extolled,
Much the vast engine; two more towers beside,
Planned like the first, were built, ere yet the daylight died.

XLVI.

But neither were their works nor their designs
From the mewed Pagans meanwhile wholly hid;
For on the wall that to the Camp inclines,
Keen spies were placed, to notice all they did:
These, though the distance insight clear forbid,
Saw what vast loads of cypress, pine, and yew.
Were from the sable forest drawn amid
The tents; they marked the rising engines too,
But of their shape and plan no clear conception drew.

XLVII.

They too frame engines, and with equal art
The towers and bulwarks fortify again,
And raise so high the fortress on the part
Last stormed, the brunt of battle to sustain,
That now, as fondly they suppose, no train
Of circumstance, or force of arms will e'er
Avail, the' assaulted city to obtain;
Whilst dark Ismeno studies to prepare
Beyond all else, fresh fires, unusual, strange, and rare.

XLVIII.

With sulphur did the curst Magician mix
Bitumen, from the lake of Sodom brought,
Brimstone, received, it strikes me, from the Styx,
And fiery spume, in hell by demons wrought;
And thus composed a cruel fire, so fraught
With smoke and stench, that, darted in the face,
Whom once it strikes it stifles; well, he thought,
By these revenging fireballs to efface,
For the enchanted wood cut down, his late disgrace.

XLIX.

Whilst thus to win or to defend the wall
Both hosts their engines frame, a turtle dove
In the blue firmament is seen of all
To pass, the Christian multitude above:
With outspread wings the liquid air she clove,
And went away as lightly as the wind;
This wandering, mute communicant of love,
So soon as she had left the camp behind,
Down from the lofty clouds to' accost the town inclined.

L.

When lo! they knew not whence, a falcon armed
With hooked beak and talons, sailed in sight;
Which, 'twixt the city and the camp, alarmed
The' opposed mild bird in her descending flight;
She waited not his truss; but, full of fright,
On instant wing to the pavilions fled,
And at the moment when the cruel kite,
Down stooping swift, just touched her tender head,
In Godfrey's bosom fell, betwixt alive and dead.

LI.

Godfrey the bird protected, and espied,
As he her plumage smoothed, a curious thing;
For from the neck, by flax of Egypt tied,
A letter hung, concealed beneath her wing.
Marvelling to see it, he untwines the string,
And breaks the seal; then well he comprehends
The purpose of the scroll: "To Judah's king,"
Thus spoke the' inscription, "to his first of friends,
Health, honour, joy, and peace the' Egyptian Caliph sends

LII.

"Fear not, my noble lord! resist, endure,
Till the fourth day, or till the fifth at most;
For by that period thou shalt see, besure,
My slaughtering sword devour the hostile host."
Such was the secret in the note enclosed,
In Syriac ciphers writ, and sealed with care,
Given in commission to this flying post;
For in the East these couriers of the air,
Trained to the trusty charge, were then by no means rare.

LIII.

The bird he freed; she, cooing her concern
That her lord's secrets had been thus betrayed,
Durst not, though innocent of ill, return
A rebel back, but fled far thence afraid.
Godfrey the intercepted scroll displayed
Before the lords and princes that compose
His military council; "See," he said,
"How well the goodness of our God forshews
To us the close designs and secrets of our foes!

LIV.

"We must no longer now protract the time,
But clear away fresh outworks; we must spare
No sweat, no labour, no fatigue to climb
The South-West walls; 't is true, the crags are there
Steep, sharp, and high, nor apt, I am aware,
For the approach of arms and engines; still
It may be done: I have surveyed with care
The coast, and find that, strengthened by the hill,
Those towers have been defenced with little cost of skill.

LV.

"Thou, Raymond, with thy men the crags ascend,
And storm those walls, whilst I with all the state
And pomp preparative of battle, bend
My horned rams against the Northern gate;
So that the foe, beguiled to' anticipate
In arms our principal bombardment there,
May leave me free hereafter to translate
My tower that slides so easily, to bear
Ruin, and dread, and death, and victory elsewhere.

LVI.

"At the same time, Camillo, thou close by,
Or not far-off, the third tower must dispose:"
He said, and good Count Raymond who sate nigh,
And as he spoke weighed well each accent, rose
And said, "This counsel no one can oppose,
'T is given in perfect wisdom, the event
Will surely prove it such; I would propose
Alone that some one midst our foes be sent,
Into their plans to pry, and creep from tent to tent;—

LVII.

"Number their troops, and with instinctive wit
Fathom their thoughts, as far as in him lies:"
Said Tancred then, "I have a Squire most fit
For the exploit, the very prince of spies;
Quick, subtle, dexterous, he has Argus eyes
For such concerns; shrewd, supple, light of toe;
Bold too, but in his boldness close and wise;
And many tongues he talks, and varies so
His gesture, voice, and gait, that none the man can know."

LVIII.

Sent for, he came; and soon as he had heard
Duke Godfrey's pleasure and his lord's, was won
To their desire; he, smiling, with a word
The task embraced, and said, "My Lords, I'm gone;
Into their unsuspicious camp anon
Enter I will, and pay implicit heed
To all their motions, recognised by none:
E'en at midnoon through all the host proceed,
And number every man, and number every steed.

LIX.

"Their hosts, their squadrons, and the arms they bring
I pledge myself to notice; nay, I vow
The closest thoughts and counsels of the king
To win adroitly from him—ask not how."
Thus with bold air Vafrino spoke; and now
Stayed but to bare his graceful neck, to wind
Long rolls of linen round his manly brow,
Change for a mantle his juppón, and bind
Round his broad waist a belt, a quiver hang behind.

LX.

And thus accoutred, in his dexter hand
A Syrian bow, with gestures nothing meek,
He seems a pure barbarian, and all stand
In absolute amaze to hear him speak
Such various tongues, so that in Greece a Greek,
In Tyre a true Phœnician, in the waste
Of marbled Tadmor an Arabian sheik,
All would have thought him; off he rides in haste,
On a swift steed that scarce disturbed the sands it paced.

LXI.

But ere the third day shone, the Franks had strained
Each nerve to smoothe the rough uneven ways,
Finished their engines, and in fact maintained
One ceaseless vigil of fatigue; the days
Alone sufficed them not; but by the blaze
Of piny torches did they task the night
With toil, disdaining sleep: to Godfrey's gaze,
All was now ready with the morning light
To prove the last extremes and fortunes of the fight.

LXII.

The Chief great part of the preceding day
Had spent in prayer, and had employed the priest
To shrive the army of their sins, that they
Might share with him the sacramental feast.
Then to the parts where he intended least
To stand the brunt of battle, he applied
His rams and mighty engines, which increased
The blinded Pagans' transport, hope and pride,
Seeing them face the gate most strongly fortified.

LXIII.

But when the night had spread her raven pall,
The huge light tower he spirited away,
To where less strong and crooked showed the wall,
And jutting angles less forbade the play
Of the strong ram; his armed tower ere day
Raymond too planting on the hill's tall crest,
Took the whole city in his broad survey;
Whilst his Camillo to that point addressed,
Where from the north the wall wheels round to front the west.

LXIV.

When now the roseate messenger of morn
Had tipt the eastern hills and towers with light,
The Pagans stared to see the tower withdrawn
Far from the spot where it stood overnight,
And seeing trembled; to the left and right
New structures also, manned and managed well,
Till now unnoticed, burst upon their sight,
With countless fresh machines,—balistæ fell,
Cat, scorpion, crossbow, ram, war-wolf, and mangonel.

LXV.

The Syrian people, though depressed at heart
By this deception, were by no means slack
Thither to move their engines from the part
Where first Duke Godfrey menaced the attack;
But he meanwhile, aware that at his back
The' Egyptian army marched, thus gave command
To Guelph and the two Roberts; "On the track
That leads to Gaza, station each a band
Of horse, and toward the south watch well, with sword in hand.

LXVI.

"And have regard, that whilst I storm the part
Where the grey battlements most weak appear,
No sudden squadron, with insidious art,
Bring round the rage of battle to my rear."
He said; three times the trumpet tubes blew drear;
To the three sounds, three valiant nations made
On three sides horrible assault severe—
'Gainst each of which, the king in brave parade
Of arms long laid aside, his hostile powers arrayed.

LXVII.

Cased in old arms, and with the weight of age
Not fear of danger trembling, forth he goes,
Long lost to war, Count Raymond to engage,
The most sagacious of his numerous foes:
The Soldan strides Duke Godfrey to oppose,
Argantes good Camillo, at whose side
Stands Bohemond's brave nephew; fortune chose,
Or rather Providence, the Prince to guide
Thus to the destined foe whose blood his falchion dyed.

LXVIII.

Straight the strong archers from their bows let fly
Ten thousand mortal barbs with poisonous stings;
That underneath a cloud of shafts, the sky
Grows dark, as though beneath the night's black wings.
But blows of more tremendous force from slings
And huge balistæ come, with ruder shocks;
For thence fly, every time the huge ram swings,
Stones, rugged masses of uprooted rocks,
Trees shod with pointed steel, lead marble, logs, and blocks.

LXIX.

Each stone a thunderbolt appears, and so
Where it alights the arms and members breaks,
Not life alone and spirit from the blow,
But form and feature e'en the man forsakes;
The long lance stays not in the wound it makes,
But onward still, still on long after hies;
Piercing the warrior's coat of mail, it takes
Its course right through him, as he fights or flies;
He feels the piercing point, and as it passes, dies.

LXX.

Yet cannot all this force and fury drive
The desperate Pagans to forsake the wall;
Still to their arms resolved they stand, and strive
Or to revenge each charge, or to forestal!
Against the strokes of the strong ram, they call
For bales of pliant wool, which from on high
They hang, and deaden thus the blows that fall;
And where the Franks show most exposed and nigh,
With thousand thousand shafts give back a proud reply.

LXXI.

Yet still the Franks, arranged in closest file,
Move on three sides the ramparts to assail,
And underneath the cat and tortoise, smile
To hear the sounding storm of arrowy hail.
To the high walls, despite the men in mail
That line their battlements, the towers are led,
And strive to launch, albeit at first they fail,
Their light pontoons; whilst, worked beneath its shead
Buts the bombarding ram with adamantine head.

LXXII.

Irresolute meanwhile Rinaldo stands,
This risk and that were far too poor a praise:
And 'twould be base in him with armed bands
To bear his flag by plain and beaten ways;
Debating thus, he casts around his gaze,—
That path alone at which all else would halt,
It pleases him to move in; he surveys
The loftiest walls their battlements exalt,
Warred on by none,—'t is there he will begin the' assault.

LXXIII.

And turning to the troop—famed heroes all—
Whom Dudon lately led, he made exclaim;
"What, my compeers! shall then this old grey wall
In the grand wrack repose in peace? O shame
To generous knighthood, chivalry, and fame!
Each hazard to the Brave assurance yields,
And all steep paths are plain to those who aim
At praise,—come on then; quick! join shield to shield,
And to their cruel shafts a stubborn tortoise build.

LXXIV.

Swift at the word all join with him, all cast
Their targets o'er their heads in brave disdain;
And, man thus wedged with man, compacted fast,
Form a tight penthouse that defies the rain
Of stones and arrows, under which amain
They speed the rapid march no rage can stay;
For well the iron tortoise does sustain
All the huge weights that with tempestuous sway
From the thronged walls descend, to bar their onward way.

LXXV.

The walls are reached; and now Rinaldo rears
Aloft a scaling ladder with a flight
Of full two hundred steps, which he appears
To move and manage with an ease as light,
As winds the willow; from the ramparts' height
Now rocks, now spears, now beams down thundering go;
Yet upward still ascends the dauntless knight,
By each rebuff unscared, unmoved, although
They should Olympus down, or piny Ossa throw.

LXXVI.

A wood of arrows on his shield alights,
A very mount of fragments, steel and stone,
On his strong back; one arm the bulwark smites,
And one the guardian target o'er the cone
Of his bright helm suspends; the courage shewn
By him excites his brave compeers no less
To deeds of daring; he mounts not alone;
Numbers beside with ladders forward press,
And climb, with various turns of valour and success.

LXXVII.

One dies—another falls—he mounts sublime,
These his praise cheers, and those his threats alarm;
And to a height so lofty does he climb,
That now he grasps with his extended arm
The topmost battlements; vast numbers swarm
Round the young knight with dagger, axe, and brand,
To smite and hurl him down; but him no harm
Repels,—O wonderful! a single hand,
Hung in mid air, has power armed thousands to withstand.

LXXVIII.

Not only he withstands, but livelier grows,
And like the palm-tree when by weights oppressed,
More strong and valiant from resistance shews,
His pulse beats brisker, loftier shoots his crest
Some of his foes he slew, dispersed the rest,
The spars and stones that on his buckler weighed
Shook off, leaped o'er the battlements, possessed
The walls he wished, and with his ruling blade
Safe for his following friends the' obstructed passage made:

LXXIX.

And to the youngest brother of the brave
And virtuous Godfrey, just about to fall,
His kind victorious hand Rinaldo gave,
And helped him second so to scale the wall.
Godfrey meanwhile, whom nothing could appal,
In other quarters various fortunes proved,
Nor were the perils he encountered small;
For there not knight alone with knight approved
His strength, but tower 'gainst tower, 'gainst engine engine moved.

LXXX.

And there the Syrians had upreared a pine
That once had served some admiral for a mast,
And hung thereto, by many a twisted line
To a huge transverse beam on high made fast,
A long steel-headed ram, stout, rude, and vast,
Which backward drawn by cords, tempestuous fell,
And shattered all at which its front was cast;
By turns the beam they pull, by turns propel,
As the snail now shrinks in, now creeps from forth its shell.

LXXXI.

Beats the huge beam, and on the tower so sore
Doubles its loud percussions, as to smite
Some paces back the pile, with all it bore,
And many a mortised rafter disunite:
The tower, for every exigence of fight
Prepared, brooked not the sounding insult long,
But from within, till now concealed from sight,
Launched out two scythes, large, crooked, sharp, and strong;
And cut the cords on which the' enormous engine swung.

LXXXII.

As a huge rock, which age or stormy winds
Uproot or loosen from some mountain steep,
Rolls headlong down, and into thin dust grinds
Woods, houses, hamlets, herds, and flocks of sheep;
So fell the frightful beam with giant leap,
Hideous, enormous, bearing to the ground
Arms, men, and turrets in its stormy sweep:
Shake the firm ramparts; rocks the tower; and round,
The hills and hollow glens rebellow back the sound.

LXXXIII.

All sanguine now to win the wall advanced
The conquering Chief; but suddenly he sees
Thick noisome clouds of flame sulphureous lanced
Against him, favoured by the driving breeze:
Ne'er did Mount Etna send forth flames like these,
Dispensing death from her cavernous womb;
Nor e'er did Indian skies, when most disease
And fervent summer filled the air with gloom,
Rain such thick vapours down, mute Nature to consume.

LXXXIV.

Here globes of wild-fire, there fly burning spears;
This flame burns black, that bloody red; the smell
Poisons, the thunder deafens all their ears,
Smoke blinds their eyes, fires scorch them, hot as hell;
Not long can e'en the moist bull-hides repel
Their fierceness, scarcely do they now defend
The tower, already they begin to swell;
They reek, they shrink, and with the blaze must blend,
Heightening its ardent rage, if Heaven no succour send.

LXXXV.

Still in the front of all the Duke abides,
Nor changes colour, countenance, or place;
But cheers on those, who from the shrivelling hides
With water strive the' advancing fires to chase.
Thus went the war; thus urgent stood their case;
Their well-used water disappearing fast,
The gathering flames they could no longer face;
When on the sudden rose a friendly blast,
And the fierce wild-fire back upon its authors cast.

LXXXVI.

The winds fought with the flames, and backward blew
The fires; for where the foe their sheds had reared,
Upon the soft materials swift it flew,
Which kindled, crackled, blazed, and disappeared.
O glorious Captain! to thy God endeared,
By thy God guarded! Heaven itself was found
Ranged on thy side; the very winds revered
Thy will, and, summoned by thy trumpet's sound,
Obedient rushed to war from all their regions round.

LXXXVII.

But fell Ismene, who saw his sulphurous fires
Forced back against him on the adverse gale,
By his black art, despite the winds, aspires
The laws of Nature yet to countervail;
Betwixt two hags, his vowed attendants, pale
In his dark mantle, on the walls he reared
His hideous shape; and with his length of nail,
His squalid aspect, and dishevelled beard,
Pluto himself between two Furies dire appeared.

LXXXVIII.

And now were heard those awful sounds which fill
With deepest horror hell's profoundest streams;
The winds already roared on every hill,
The sun in clouds withdrew his golden beams;
When sudden, frustrate of his impious schemes,
A stone, or rather rock, the tower robust,
As still the' accursed wretch high Heaven blasphemes,
Hurled from its bowels with a stroke so just
As brayed at once their bones and bodies into dust.

LXXXIX.

To bloody dust minute their heads and brains
Were widely scattered with a roaring sound;
To bloody dust, minuter than the grains
Of corn to meal betwixt rough mill-stones ground;
With groans the three foul spirits leave the round
Of the blue heavens and fine ethereal sense
Of joy and sunshine, for the shades profound
Of hell;—learn, mortals, piety from hence,
Nor dare God's slumbering wrath omnipotent incense!

XC.

Meanwhile the engine rescued from the flame
By the kind whirlwind, to the city ran,
And, all resistance now defeated, came
So near the ramparts that its bridge began,
Launched, to attach; but thither Solyman
Rushed on the instant; sharply did he ply
His strokes, and certainly the' audacious man
Had hewed it down, but suddenly his eye
Another tower beheld, uprising in the sky.

XCI.

The' enormous pile shot up into the air
Far above spire, mosque, minaret, and tower;
So that the Pagans in their stupor stare
To see the city subject to its power.
But the fierce Turk still keeps his stand, though lour
The clouds of ruin round him; he derives
Strength from the strife: and, careless of the shower
Of stones, to cut the bridge still trusts and strives;
And his despairing friends with glorying shouts revives.

XCII.

The' archangel Michael, clad in arms divine,
To Godfrey then, but visible to none
Besides, appeared; his face did far outshine,
When clear of every cloud, the noonday sun.
"Godfrey," he cried, "the fated sands are run;
This is the hour to cancel with thy blade
The chains of Sion; thy desire is won!
Droop not, droop not thine eyes to earth, dismayed,
But see what numerous hosts I bring, thine arms to aid.

XCIII.

"Lift up thine eyes, and in mid air the' immense,
Immortal army on its march survey!
For the dim veil that clouds your mortal sense,
And from the cradle to the tomb your clay
Wraps round with darkness, lo! I rend away,
That thou the angels in their shapes mayst see,
And, one short moment, the effulgent ray
Of their celestial essences, with free
Undazzled sight sustain,—long time it may not be.

XCIV.

"Observe the souls of every lord and knight,
Christ's blessed saints, who late but champions were!
With what a holy zeal they seek the fight,
The final glory with thyself to share!
Lo! what mixt clouds of smoke and dust in air
Fluctuate aloft from the dismantled town;
And lo, that lofty heap of ruins! there,
Hugo, conspicuous by his sapphire crown,
Heaves high his golden mace, and beats the huge towers down.

XCV.

"Dudon is he who at the Northern fort,
Which he with fire and sword assaults, prepares
Arms for the Franks, nor ceases to exhort
Fresh knights to mount the tall scalades he bears;
That surpliced Saint who in his tresses wears
The sacerdotal crown, on yonder hill,
Is the blest soul of Ademar,—his cares
The same as erst; observe with what good-will,
He deals his pastoral signs and benedictions still.

XCVI.

"Look higher yet, and, witnessing the war
The whole hierarchy of Heaven survey!"
He raised his eyes; and at one prospect saw,
In myriad numbers numberless, the' array,
Three squadrons wing'd; each radiating away
In triple phalanx from the' observer's eye,
Ring beyond ring,—a beautiful display
Of winged orbs, that, widening as they fly
Sublime, possess the whole circumference of the sky.

XCVII.

Here he his dazzled eyes declined, nor more
The glorious vision in its pomp descried;
When next he looked, the wondrous show was o'er,
And gazing round, he saw on every side
His troops victorious; many a hero vied
After divine Rinaldo to command
The walls, leaped up, and deep his falchion dyed;
Godfrey, this seen, aloof disdained to stand,
But snatched the Red-Cross staff from his flag-bearer's hand,

XCVIII.

And passes first the bridge; but midway here
Finds the stern Soldan ready to debate
His farther passage; few their strokes, but clear
Their prowess,—a small plank the field of fate!
"Lo, here," the Soldan shouts, "I consecrate,
Here yield my gallant spirit up this day,
For Sion's good! So ho! my friends, I prate,—
Cut the pontoon down at my back, and they
Shall have small cause to boast the pleasure of their prey!"

XCIX.

But when he saw far-off Rinaldo tend
Toward him, and all his friends in flight, he said;
"What now remains? if thus my life I spend,
To what advantage will my blood be shed?"
Revolving thus, with slow disdainful tread
He turned aside, and left the pass assayed
Free to the Chief: who following as he fled
The Soldan's footsteps, with his brandished blade,
High on the rampart walls the purple Cross displayed.

C.

The glorious ensign in a thousand wreaths
And folds voluminous rejoicing twines;
It seems the wind on it more sweetly breathes;
It seems the sun on it more brightly shines;
That each tossed javelin, each aimed shaft declines
To strike the staff; the streets Hosannas sound;
Floods clap their hands, on mountains dance the pines:
Seems it that Sion, that her green hills crowned,
Stoop from the clouds their crests, and bend adoring round.

CI.

Then raised the Christians all their long loud shout
Of victory, joyful, resonant, and high;
Their words the towers and temples lengthen out;
To the glad sound the mountains make reply:
At the same moment, joining in the cry,
Tancred each strong obstruction overthrew
Raised by Argantes; brought his engine nigh,
Cast out his bridge, and, without more ado,
Leaped on the conquered wall, and raised his standard too.

CII.

But on the hills toward the South, where fought
Raymond the hoary with the Syrian king,
The Gascon knights their engine had not brought
Yet to the walls, nor possibly could bring;
For there the Tyrant had in aid a ring
Of soldiery, the flower of all his host,
Who stubbornly with mace, with sword, and sling,
Stood to the strife; the walls too on that coast
Were, as less firm and high, with engines strengthened most.

CIII.

Besides, on that steep side the' enormous tower
Less steady footing for its passage found;
Nor could their utmost industry and power
Correct the rugged nature of the ground:
But when the shout from all the quarters round
Reached the two hosts that here the walls contest,
Both Aladine and Raymond by the sound
Were well assured that on the North and West,
The long defended town already was possessed.

CIV.

Which heard, the Count shouts to the knights he led
"Taken already is the' assaulted town;
And does it conquer us? shall it be said
We only share not in the day's renown?"
But here the troubled king, quite desperate grown
Of the dispute, drew off his chivalry
To the strong-hold of his endangered Crown,
His last lorn hope, a fortress strong and high,
Where yet long time he trusts the' assailants to defy.

CV.

Then the whole host pours in, not o'er the walls
Alone, but through the gates, which soon unclose,
Battered or burnt; and in wide ruin falls
Each strong defence that might their march oppose.
Rages the sword; and Death, the Slaughterer, goes
'Twixt Woe and Horror with gigantic tread,
From street to street; the blood in torrents flows,
And settles in lagoons, on all sides fed,
And swelled with heaps on heaps of dying and of dead.

CANTO XIX

Stanza cx.

ARGUMENT.

ANCRED in single combat slays his foe
The terrible Argantes; Aladine
Flees to the citadel, and saveth so
His host; Erminia challenges Vafrine;
Of the leagued hosts reveals the masked design,
Accompanies him back, and on the sands
Finds her loved lord half dead beneath a pine;
First mourns, then cures him; Godfrey understands
Ormondo's plot, and acts as circumstance demands.

I.

Now prudence, death, or fear each Pagan knight
Has ravished from the walls; alone his mace
Argantes plies upon the battled height,
And obstinately still disputes the place;
Still with a cheerful and intrepid face
Fights on secure against the chivalry
That hems him in; and, dreading the disgrace,
Far more than death, of being forced to fly,
Sooner than seem to yield stands all resolved to die.

II.

But beyond all importunate to quell
The Pagan, Tancred presses through the crowd;
The knight Argantes recognised right well
By his known arms, keen strokes, and bearing proud,
For him who fought with him before, and vowed
Return on the sixth morning, nor the vow
Fulfilled, made captive; whence he shouts aloud;
"Prince! is it thus you keep your faith? and now
Return you thus to war, redeemed one scarce knows how?

III.

"Late you return, and not alone, yet I
Shun not the battle, nor the issues fear;
Although, to all appearance, you draw nigh
Not as a knight, but as an engineer:
But make a shield of your Italians here,
New forms of war, strange arms invent in aid,
They shall not serve you now, false chevalier,
Foul slaughterer of fair ladies, to evade
The death already due to my defrauded blade!"

IV.

The good Lord Tancred answered with a smile
Of some disdain, in terms of like proud glee;
"All late as is my slow return,—erewhile,
'T will seem, I fancy, much too soon for thee;
For thou shalt wish, on how devout a knee,
Some Alp or ocean spread its wide barriér
Of space betwixt us; then too shalt thou see,
By fatal proof, if cowardice or fear
Has made indeed my sword so long a stranger here.

V.

"But step aside, O thou whose haughty arms
Big giants only and tough knights chastise;
Thee to a field apart from these alarms
The mighty slaughterer of fair dames defies!"
This said, he to his followers turns, and cries;
"Back from the warrior! brave him not a blow:
Nay, vassals, never grudge your Chief his prize;
For mine he is more than a common foe,
Mine, both by challenge now, and promise long ago!"

VI.

"Come down, alone or followed, to the feud,
E'en as you will," the Saracen replied;
"To the thronged field or to the lonely wood,
Whate'er the odds, I stir not from your side!"
Thus ending parle, the challenged and defied
In open concord from the walls descend,
By mortal fight their quarrel to decide;
Hate made them one, and, e'en as friend would friend,
Each did the other's life, from pure despite, defend.

VII.

Great is the thirst of praise, great the desire
Which Tancred has to slay a foe so grand;
Nor would his blood, he fancies, slake his ire,
If but a drop were shed by other's hand:
He guards the Pagan with his shield; and, "Stand!
Strike not!" he cries to all he meets; and so,
Safe from the rage of each encountering band,
From falchion, dagger, spear and bended bow,
Through thousand angry friends he brings his careless foe.

VIII.

The busy roar of war, the' invaded town,
And void pavilions far they leave behind,
Following a footpath, that o'er dale and down
In many a secret coil and tangle twined;
At length a small secluded vale they find,
Deep in the heart of woody hills embayed,
As it for sylvan sport had been designed,
Or Roman circus by proconsul made
For gladiatorial show,—shut in by silent shade.

IX.

Here then they paused; and, full of anxious thought,
Argantes turned, the' afflicted town to view;
Tancred, perceiving that the knight had brought
With him no shield, his own to distance threw;
And said, "What gloom does thus thy soul subdue?
Think'st thou the destined hour to terminate
Thy life at length is come? if this thou rue,
With pensive mind prophetic of thy fate,
Thy fear is useless all, thy foresight comes too late!"

X.

"I think," said he, (and sighed), "on that lorn town,
The pomp of realms, about to pass away,
The queen of Syria, hoary in renown,
Whose fatal ruin I have failed to stay;
I think how insignificant a prey
To my disdain and vengeance is the due
Which on thy head Heaven destines me to-day!"
He ceased; and each to each with caution drew,
For well each armed knight his rival's prowess knew.

XI.

Tancred is light of limb in hand and foot,
Swift as the wind that o'er the valley scours;
Monstrous in girth, like some terrific brute,
And taller by the head Argantes towers;
Tancred now wheels, now traverses, now cowers,
Like the coiled snake in act at will to glide
Home to his victim, or with fiercer powers
Shoot out; still parrying stroke with stroke, he tried
All points of skill to turn the' assailing sword aside.

XII.

But spacious and erect, Argantes shews
Like skill, in different posture; as he can,
Straight to his mark with stretched-out arm he goes,
And seeks to' encounter not the steel, but man;
That tries each moment some new point or plan.
This never fails an instant to present
His sabre at the face; and, swift of scan,
With threatening blade stands ready to prevent
The stol'n advance, quick pass, and treacherous feigned intent.

XIII.

E'en thus two gallant ships, when not a gale
Stirs the smooth surface of the silent main,
One famed for size, and one for speed of sail,
With force unequal, equal fight maintain;
This bears down lightly, goes and comes again,
Wheels round from prow to poop, and still the eye
Mocks, whilst the other doth unmoved remain,
And ever as the nimbler one draws nigh,
Threats with its vast machines wild ruin from on high.

XIV.

Whilst to rush in the wily Latin strives,
Shunning the point that glittered at his breast,
The blade Argantes brandishes, and drives
Full at the face, which Tancred would arrest;
But the fell Pagan, as he forward pressed,
Strongly, and swift as flies a Parthian shaft,
Coiled his strong wrist aslant,—the sword digressed,
And ploughed his side; whereat he gaily laughed
And cried: "By blest Mahound, the craftsman's foiled in craft!"

XV.

Prince Tancred bit his lips 'twixt scorn and shame,
Laid by all points of skill, and on his foe
Burns for revenge with such an eager aim,—
Victory appears defeat, achieved so slow;
The boast he answers by his sword, and lo!
Where the barred vizor opens to the sight,
Dares a fierce thrust; the formidable blow
Argantes breaks, and, in the fast despite
Of risk, at half-sword's length stept in the audacious knight.

XVI.

With his left hand the Pagan's strong right arm
He seized, and with his right his falchion plied;
With many a deadly gash of deepest harm
Piercing at will the undefended side.
"To his triumphant tutor," loud he cried,
"This happy answer the foiled sciolist
Yields in reply!" with passion, pain, and pride,
Argantes groaned, and writhing, strove to twist
From the Italian's grasp, in vain, the prisoned wrist.

XVII.

His sword suspended by its chain at length
He left, and griped his rival round the waist;
The same did Tancred, and with all their strength
Each grappling crushed the other, breast to breast:
Not with more force divine Alcides pressed
Upheaved Antæus on the Libyan sands;—
In this their long and muscular caress
Of hate, they knit tenacious knots and bands,
Flinging in various forms their brawny arms and hands.

XVIII.

Pressing, compressed, whirled round, they wrestled, till
Both overpowered together pressed the ground;
Argantes, whether by good chance or skill,
His better arm, in perfect freedom found;
But the more dexterous hand to strike and wound
Tancred had undermost, and thus restrained,
Himself from the fierce arm that clasped him round,
Strong with the sense of risk, he disenchained,
And lightly leaping up, firm footing straight regained.

XIX.

Far slowlier rose the' unwieldy Saracine,
And ere he rose received a cleaving blow;
But as in blustering winds the mountain pine
Rears, the next moment that its head stoops low,
Its leafy forehead to the clouds, e'en so
When most oppressed, his valour rises higher;
And now again ferocious thrusts they throw,
Fierce strokes exchange; and, in their sightless ire,
The fight, with less of skill, grows momently more dire.

XX.

From Tancred's wounds large drops of purple came,
But from the Pagan's flowed a perfect flood;
And now his fury, like a wasting flame
Unfed with fuel, faints from loss of blood;
Tancred, who saw his foe, in strength subdued,
Slowly and slowlier wave his weary blade,
To noblest pity calmed his own fell mood,
The angry passions of his soul allayed,
Dropt a few paces back, and thus mild speaking, said:

XXI.

"Yield thee, brave man! and recognise in me,
Or in strong Fate, thy victor; live, Sir Knight;
No spoil, no triumph do I seek o'er thee,
Nor to my arms reserve a victor's right!"
To this the Pagan, with a frown like Night,
More fierce than ever, kindling into flame
The slumbering furies of his soul, in spite
Replied; "Dost thou, dost thou the' advantage claim,
And dost thou dare to tempt Argantes to his shame!

XXII.

"Use thy scorned fortune; I will yet chastise,
Presumptuous fool! the frenzy of that phrase!"
As a spent taper musters ere it dies
Its flames, to perish in the splendid blaze,
So, cherishing with rage the blood that plays
Thus feebly in his veins, he would supply
Strength to the spirit which so fast decays;
And his last hour of life, which now drew nigh,
Crown with a glorious end, and like a hero die.

XXIII.

To his left hand its fellow he applied,
And with them both impelled his heavy blade;
Down it descended,—meeting, struck aside
The prince's sword, nor there its fury stayed;
But, glancing from the shoulder, did invade
All his left side in its oblique career,
And many wounds at the same moment made;
If Tancred quailed not at the stroke severe,
'Twas that his heart was formed incapable of fear.

XXIV.

His blow the Paynim doubled, but he spent
On the void air his desperate energy,
As Tancred, conscious of his fierce intent,
The stroke prevented, slipping nimbly by.
By thine own weight o'erbalanced dost thou lie
On earth, Argantes, nor couldst shun the fall;
Thyself hast thou o'erthrown—oh fatal die,
Well cast! thrice happy, that none else can call
Himself thy conqueror now, or triumph in thy thrall.

XXV.

His gaping wounds the fall made yet more wide,
And from their lips fresh purple torrents broke;
Raised by his hand upon one knee, he tried
On new defence the battle to provoke.
"Yield," cried the courteous prince, "and live!" no stroke
He struck or menaced, as he made the' appeal;
The sullen Pagan not an accent spoke,
But at swift stealth shot out his treacherous steel,
And with a shout of joy exulting pierced his heel.

XXVI.

Then rose the rage of Tancred, and he said,
"Villain! dost thou my mercy thus deride!"
Then plunged, and plunged again his fatal blade
Where a free pass the aventayle supplied.
Thus died Argantes: as he lived, he died,
Dying, he menaced death; no lamentation
Broke from his lips, but fixt, unbending pride,
Ferocious hate, and scorn of all salvation,
Spoke in his latest words and last gesticulation.—

XXVII.

His sword then sheathing, to his guardian Saint
Prince Tancred paid his solemn thanks sincere;
But from the strife enfeebled, worn, and faint,
His bloody meed has cost the victor dear;
So that he seriously began to fear
His limbs would scarcely serve him to retrace
His homeward path; yet to the pine-tree near,
Which kept the entrance to that shady place,
He step by step moved on, with slow unsteady pace.

XXVIII.

Not far can the weak knight his steps command,
The more he hastes, more tired, the less his speed;
Whence he at length sits down, and on his hand,
His hand, that trembles like a shaking reed,
Propped on his elbow, leans his head; fast bleed
His wounds, the scene spins round, his giddy brain
Grows dull, and night seems in her sable weed
To wrap the day; at length he swoons with pain,
And undistinguished lies the slayer from the slain.

XXIX.

Whilst the two lords pursue their lonely fight,
So fierce and bloody made by private hate,
The angry victors in the city smite
The guilty people wide from gate to gate:
Pressed, on all sides they rush, to shun their fate;
Oh, who can fully picture in his page
The horrors of the sack! what tongue relate
In fitting terms the agony—the rage—
The dreadful scenes that passed on such a spacious stage!

XXX.

Each place is choked with carnage, filled with death;
In intertangled heaps the slaughtered lie;
The falling rests upon the fallen; beneath
The' unburied dead the buried living die;
Here with dishevelled locks mad mothers fly,
Straining their infants to their breasts; and there
The savage spoiler, drunk with victory
And rifled treasure, by her golden hair
Drags off the shrieking maid to his voluptuous lair.

XXXI.

But through the streets which near the western hills,
Where he beholds the solemn Temple stand,
All moist and horrid with the blood he spills,
Rinaldo, rushing, drives the Paynim band;
The cruel falchion in his red right-hand
O'er their plumed heads in bickering circles waves;
Its strokes nor shield nor helmet can withstand;
He bleeds who vainly turns, he dies who braves;
It is the want of arms, not armour here which saves.

XXXII.

On steel alone his noble steel descends,
The' unarmed he scorns to hurt; the armed, the strong
Who dare him not, and whom no mail defends,
By frowns and dreadful shouts he drives along.
Oh who can tell, nor do his valour wrong,
What prodigies he wrought; how wide he spread,
How menaced, spared, spurred on the trembling throng
How with unequal risk, but equal dread,
Armed and unarmed alike his face affrighted fled!—

XXXIII.

Already with the crowd their bravest men,
A numerous party, had the Temple gained;
Which, burnt and oft rebuilt as it had been,
The name of its great founder still retained.
Of cedar, gold, and marbles richly stained,
The glorious tribute of a thousand shores,
King Solomon had framed it: it remained,
If with less splendid roofs and plainer floors,
Strong with embattled towers, firm walls, and brazen doors.

XXXIV.

Reaching this fortress, in whose spacious heart
The multitude were fled, Rinaldo found
The portals closed, and every single part
Of the high battlements with lances crowned,
And threatening mangonels: he rolled around
His flashing eyes, and twice the strong retreat
Scanned from its topmost turret to the ground,
Some narrow pass to spy, and twice in heat
Circled the spacious pile on swift, impatient feet.

XXXV.

As the destroying wolf at midnight prowls,
With eager hungry jaws and eyes of fire,
Round the penned fold, and disappointed growls
With fierce instinctive hate and native ire;
So goes Rinaldo, wild with the desire
To penetrate the fabric he surveys;
In vain—it stands impassive and entire;
In the grand Court at length his steps he stays,
And they the' assault expect with fixt, despairing gaze.

XXXVI.

By chance, for some rare use reserved, there lay
A long and tapering beam the hero nigh;
The tightest argosy in Genoa's bay
Has not a mast more stately, stout, and high;
On this the noble Infant cast his eye,
And with that hand to which all weights were light,
Poising the formidable lance on high,
To his friends' wonder and his foes' affright,
Hurled it against the gates, with unexampled might.

XXXVII.

Nor brass nor marble stone could stand before
The sudden force of that tremendous blow;
The sounding hinges from the rock it tore,
Broke the strong locks, and laid the portals low:
Nor battering engine, nor balista-bow,
Nor fulmining petard, death's thunderball,
Could have done more: in, like a deluge, flow
Through the void pass vast numbers, at the call
Of the triumphant youth, the' inspiring soul of all.

XXXVIII.

Their dreadful slaughter black and mournful made
That lofty pile, once consecrate to God;
Oh heavenly justice! sharp, if long delayed,
On wicked nations falls thy chastening rod:
Under thy secret influence, at thy nod,
Rage woke in hearts by nature soft and mild;
Till the grim Frank alone on corses trod,
And the revilers, in their turn reviled,
Washed with their blood the fane their sins had late defiled.

XXXIX.

But Solyman meanwhile to the strong tower,
Which yet the name of David bore, was sped,
And with the gathered remnant of his power,
Blocked up each street that to the fortress led;
And thither too the feeble Tyrant fled,
Whom when the Soldan saw, he thus bespoke:
"Come, famous Prince! and shield thy noble head
On the towered summit of this lofty rock,
Where thou the worst assaults of battle still may'st mock.

XL.

"Here from the rage of hostile swords, thy crown,
Thy life and kingdom mayst thou yet defend;"
"Woe's me!" he answered, "woe is me! my Town
Barbaric hands from the foundations rend;
My race is run,—my rule is at an end,—
I lived, I reigned; I live and reign no more;
For all that now is left me, O my friend,
Is to exclaim, 'We were!'—all, all is o'er!
Our final hour's at hand; pale Death is at the door!

XLI.

"Where then," the angry Soldan made exclaim,
"Where is thine old heroic courage flown?
Ill-fortune take our kingdoms! are not fame,
Worth, pride, and kingly grandeur yet our own!
These with us stay, though those be overthrown:
But rest within thy weary limbs, and court
Refreshment; there are those will guard thy throne:"
Thus saying, he at once unclosed the port,
And led the hoary king within the' embattled fort.

XLII.

His iron mace he grasps with both his hands,
Girds fast the trusty sabre to his thigh,
And in the' attempted pass intrepid stands,
The whole Frank people singly to defy;
Quick, mortal blows fall horrid from on high,
The rash they daunt, the' heroic they abase;
Whom they kill not, they stun at least,—all fly
At length, and vacant leave the' invested place,
Where'er he cares to move with his gigantic mace.—

XLIII.

But lo! well sheathed in brigandine of brass,
Arrived, and followed by a hundred knights,
Earl Raymond rushes to the dangerous pass,
And the tremendous weapon sternly slights;
He at the Soldan first, but vainly smites,
Vainly his sword descends; but not in vain
The furious Saracen his stroke requites;
Struck on the temples, with bewildered brain
And quivering arms he lies, extended on the plain.—

XLIV.

And now the vanquished reassume the fire
Which fear had banished from their hearts of late,
And the Frank victors, beaten back, retire,
Or slaughtered fall within the portal-gate:
But the Arch-Genius of the fierce debate,
Seeing the earl, betwixt alive and dead,
Lie with the slaughtered at his feet, elate,
Called to his Saracens behind, and said;
"Drag in this captive knight; what now have ye to dread?"

XLV.

Forward they rushed to execute the deed,
But found the task both dangerous and severe;
For to the rescue, with like eager speed,
All Raymond's people flock, with sword and spear.
There pious duty fights, brute fury here,
In no mean cause, and with no mean intent;
The life—the freedom of so brave a peer
Hang on their blades; to seize him these are bent,—
Those bleed, the' affront at once to' avenge and to prevent.

XLVI.

Yet had the stubborn Turk at length prevailed,
Such eager thirst for vengeance he displayed,
For 'gainst his thundering weapon nought availed
The sevenfold shield, fine helm, or tempered blade,—
But from each side a new and powerful aid
Was suddenly perceived approaching near,
The well-contested fortress to invade;
And both at once, from adverse points, appear—
The sovereign Captain there, the young Rinaldo here.

XLVII.

Then as a shepherd, when the whirlwind's blast
Comes sweeping on, with lightning, hail, and rain,
Seeing the skies with thousand clouds o'ercast,
His fleecy charge drives from the open plain;
And looks around, solicitous to gain
The sheltered valley or o'erarching rock,
Where Heaven's hot wrath they may unhurt sustain;
With crook and cry he forward speeds the flock,
And last avoids himself the storm's infuriate shock:—

XLVIII.

Just so the Pagan Prince, when he descried
The' inevitable tempest, heard the blast
That startled heaven, and saw, on either side,
The field with groves of lances overcast,
Sent back his men, well guarded by his vast
Encircling shield and adamantine mace,
Into the tower, himself retiring last;
Last he retires, but with that haughty pace,
Which shews he neither yields in fear nor in disgrace.

XLIX.

'T was task enough for him the tower to gain ;
Scarce were the portals barred, the' escape made good,
Than both the doors and bars were rent in twain,
And on the threshold young Rinaldo stood ;
Nor lingered there ; desire to see subdued
The knight in deeds of arms unmatched, disdain,
And his own oath impelled him to the feud ;
Remembering well his promise to the Dane,
Of keen revenge on him who had Prince Sweno slain.

L.

And then, e'en then had his unconquered hand
Essayed the stubborn citadal, nor there
Had the Turk found perchance his dauntless stand
Of much avail—the victor's blade was bare,—
But falling twilight now obscured the air,
And loud and long the warning trumpet blew,
Sounding retreat ; within the spacious square
Godfrey abode, and round his forces drew,
Prompt with the morning sun the struggle to renew.

LI.

" Lo !" he exclaimed, with transport on his brow.
" The God of Sabaoth has our armies blessed ;
The tug of war is o'er ; but little now
Remains, my friends, your glory to arrest,
Nought to dismay ; this tower which we invest,
The last sad refuge of the Paynim, ere
To-morrow ends, we from their hands shall wrest ;
Meanwhile let pity urge you with all care
To tend your comrades' wounds, and sooth the pains they bear.

LII.

" Go, care for those who at a price so dear
Have of these kingdoms purchased thus the sway !
This more befits the Christian chevalier,
Than base desire of vengeance, or of prey.
Too much, ah, too much cruelty this day
Hath witnessed ! too much lust of treasure still—
I speak it to your shame—do some display !
But at your peril plunder more, or kill ;
Heralds ! your trumpets sound, and publish forth my will."

LIII.

This said, he went where, from his swoon awoke,
Groaned in his pain the faint Provençal Chief:
Nor with less boldness to his soldiers spoke
The dauntless Turk, and thus disguised his grief;
"Heaven, O my friends, will yet a bright relief
Bring to our gloom! be firm: in fortune's spite,
Your flower of hope yet shews a verdant leaf;
For under all this glare of false affright,
Our harm has been but small, our loss exceeding light.

LIV.

"The City is not seized; the Christian Lords
Have gained the ramparts, beat the vulgar down,
But in the person of your king, your swords,
And shields, you yet comprise the glorious Town.
Safe stands your Monarch, safe you see his crown,
Safe his best knights, whilst round this noble host
Strong walls arise; vain trophy of renown,
Let the gay Franks the' abandoned suburbs boast.
To them the' ambitious game may yet at last be lost.

LV.

"May be? it must! for, flattered into pride
By their so prosperous fortune, all their mind
Will but to ceaseless riot, homicide,
And most intemperate dalliance be inclined.
In this wild tumult, drunk with blood, and blind
To all but beauty, they must needs appear
But as a rolling wave before the wind,
If the Egyptian host, which now is near,
Come with the clouds of night, and take them in the rear

LVI.

"We with our engines may meanwhile annoy
Each street that leads to yon accursed tomb;
The loftiest structures o'er our foes destroy,
And thus our lordship in the town resume."
With these bold words he dissipates their gloom;
Exiles their fear, exiles their wild amaze,
And plants both hope and courage in their room:
Whilst these events were passing, midst a blaze
Of arms and gorgeous tents, unawed Vafrino strays.

LVII.

The lark was warbling sweet her evening song,
When through the shadows of declining day
Vafrino left the' encampment; all night long
He travelled on his dark and lonely way;
High Ascalon he passed, ere morning grey
O'er the dim landscape shed its grateful light,
And when the sun with culminating ray
Had reached its hot meridian, to the right
The vast, the boundless camp burst proudly on his sight.

LVIII.

Millions of tents, o'erwaved with flags unfurled,
Green, purple, gold, and crimson, he espies;
And hears such strange wild tongues, and such a world
Of savage sounds from barbarous metals rise,
Trumpet, and horn, and gong, with camels' cries,
Roarings of elephants, and neighings clear
Of shrill-voiced coursers, climbing to the skies,
That to himself he says, with soul sincere,
"All Asia, Libya all are sure transported here!"

LIX.

He first the' encampment and its strength surveys,
The circling rampart, its extent, and height,
Then seeks no more obscure and winding ways,
But boldly issues to the public sight;
And with an air most unconcerned and light
Enters the regal gates direct, and now
Asks, and now answers questions, with a sleight
But to be equalled by the frank bold brow
Which makes his answers good, and greets it cares not how.

LX.

Through the long crowded streets, the tents and squares,
Now here, now there, solicitous he turns;
The horses, armours, chiefs, the name each bears,
Their arts and customs he observes and learns;
Nor satisfied with this, his spirit burns,
And partly manages to know the bent
Of their most secret projects and concerns;
So well he speeds beneath his fair ostent,
As e'en to win access to the imperial tent.

LXI.

Here, looking round, he marked a rent, through which
The voice within found egress, and whereby
The Viceroy's private cabinet, a rich
Recess, was obvious to the curious eye;
So that whoever chose thereto to' apply
His ear without, might gather whatsoe'er
Transpired within; at this the matchless spy
Planted himself, as with assiduous care
The tent's defective seam adroitly to repair.

LXII.

The Chief bareheaded stood, in arms, and wore
A vest of Tyrian purple; in the rear
Two pages his bright shield and helmet bore;—
Thoughtful he stood, and, leaning on his spear,
Gave heed to one who with a look severe,
Tall in his stature, sinewy in his frame,
High points discussed; Vafrino was all ear;
And, surely fancying that he heard the name
Of Bouillon's lord, yet more inquisitive became.

LXIII.

He heard the Chieftain question; "Art thou then
So sure of Godfrey's death?" "So sure," said he,
"I take my oath by Allah, ne'er again
But as a matador thy face to see;
I will outstrip all those who are with me
Sworn to the deed; nor ask I other bliss,
Than to hang up in trophy, by decree
Of our great prince, in his metropolis,
The man's rich arms, subscribed with some such verse as this:—

LXIV.

"'These arms in war from the Frank Chief, the curse
And scourge of Asia, brave Ormondo tore,
When him he slew; the fame whereof, this verse
And trophied marble laud for evermore!'"
"Of this," the armed Leader said, "no more;
Think not the king will leave unglorified
A deed which both the Egypts must adore;
Thy wish, besure, he will fulfil with pride,
And grace thy conquering brows with priceless gems beside.

LXV.

"Now then the counterfeited arms prepare,
For the great day of fight approaches fast:"
"They are all ready," he replied, and there
Both ended parle, and from the chamber passed.
Suspense and doubt Vafrino's mind o'ercast;
Long as he weighed the seeming aim and end
Of their discourse, the project to the last
Remained obscure,—he could not comprehend,
What by this feint of arms the traitors could intend.

LXVI.

Thence he departed, nor the livelong night
His eyes to slumber or repose resigned;
But when that mighty camp at morning light
Unfurled its thousand banners to the wind,
He in their march the hostile squadrons joined,
Like the trained hound sequacious of its scent;
With them he halted when the day declined,
And, as before, stalked slow from tent to tent,
Eager to gather more of this disguised intent.

LXVII.

On a rich throne, mid knights and damsels gay,
Searching around, Armida he descries;
Forlorn she sits, and inly seems to weigh
Some deep sad thought, for as she sits she sighs.
On her white hand in melancholy guise
She leans her rosy cheek, and so would fain
Hide the love-darting radiance of her eyes;
Weeps she or no he knows not, but 't is plain
The stars in heaven are dim, and lour, presaging rain.

LXVIII.

In front of her Adrastus sits, nor heeds
Aught but her charms,—he moves not, scarce respires,
So stedfastly he hangs on her, and feeds
His pining hopes and unappeased desires.
But Tisaphernes now the dame admires,
Now eyes the savage, whom in soul he spurns
From her dear sight; the whilst with changeful fires
His visage dark and radiant shews by turns,
As Love's mild watchlight shines, or Wrath's hot beacon burns.

LXIX.

Then Altamore he views, where more apart
He stands, enclosed amidst her virgins bright;
He lets not loose his glances, but with art
Rules his fond fancy and his wishful sight:
His left eye marks her hand, her face, his right
Glides down voluptuous on a sweeter quest,
And secretly slips in, to its delight,
Where the too careless and indulgent vest
Reveals, at every swell, the beauty of her breast.

LXX.

At length Armida raised her eyes, and straight
Her brow cleared up; and through the clouds of grief
With which her pensive features gloomed of late,
Flashed a sweet smile in beautiful relief.
"Prince," she said, turning to the Indian Chief,
"Thy vaunts have power my sorrows to assuage;
For they confirm me in the fond belief
That I shall have quick vengeance: sweet is rage,
When willing Hope takes up Revenge's daring gage."

LXXI.

"For Allah's sake, serene," the Indian said,
"Thy mournful aspect, and thy griefs control;
For soon indeed Rinaldo's hated head
I in glad vengeance at thy feet will roll;
Or, if it more thy sorrow should console,
In chains conduct him to whatever jail
May please thee most; I swear it on my soul."
His rival, hearing thus the ruffian rail,
Deigned not a word himself, but gnawed his bitter nail.

LXXII.

She, turning then on Tisapherne a smile,
Said; "What say'st thou, and how dost thou decide?"
"I, who am backward in this vaunting style,"
The noble Prince in irony replied,
"Will follow this grim champion with a stride
Less stately, and at distance:" his sharp sneer
Stung the fierce savage to the quick, who cried;
"And fit it is that he whose arm must fear
To match the king of Inde's, *should* linger far arear."

LXXIII.

The Persian, nettled at the word, tossed high
The haughty plumes upon his head, and said;
"Oh, were I master of my will, had I
But free permission to unsheath my blade,
Which was the lingerer should be soon displayed!
Nor thee, nor thy big vaunts, ferocious brute!
But Heaven and unconsenting Love I dread:"
He ceased; Adrastus rushed to the dispute;
But then Armida rose, and twixt them placed her foot.

LXXIV.

"Why will you thus retract the oaths," said she,
"Which you so oft have given? respect my woes;
Both are my champions; let that title be
The bond your fatal discords to compose:
He that is wroth, is wroth with me; who throws
Scorn on his comrade, spares not to provoke
My just displeasure; to your cost be foes!"
Thus she exclaimed; and thus beneath a yoke
Stronger than steel, their hot, rebellious spirits broke.

LXXV.

Vafrine was there; and, treasuring in his mind
All he heard mentioned, from the tent retired;
Some deep dark plot he clearly saw designed,
Some plot, that was not thus to have transpired;
But this was all; he busily inquired
The naked fact, but fruitlessly; defeat
And difficulty but the more inspired
The anxious wish his mission to complete;
Fixed or to learn the truth, or there his death to meet.

LXXVI.

A thousand tricks and subtleties of brain,
A thousand unimagined means he tried,
To worm the secret out, but still in vain,—
The plan was still unknown, the arms unspied.
Fortune at length, when wit alone could guide
His steps no farther, lent her gracious aid,
And the dark knot of all his doubts untied;
So that all points of the dire project laid
Against good Bouillon's life, before him were displayed.

LXXVII.

Thither he turned again, where still among
Her armed lovers sat the Syrian queen,
Judging the truth would soonest find a tongue,
Where such a crowd of visitors convene.
Here now he greets a damsel with the mien
Of one in all polite enchantments versed,
As though the lady he before had seen,
And but renewed some friendship that had erst
'Twixt them subsisted long; and frankly he conversed.

LXXVIII.

"Fain would I too," he sportively began,
"Become the champion of some charming maid,
And, in fulfilment of the purposed plan,
The blood of Bouillon or Rinaldo shed;
Ask then some boon, my Beauty, that may wed
My soul to your sweet service; what you please,
Or stout earl's heart or barbarous baron's head:"
Thus he commenced, intending by degrees
To slip from gay to grave, and learn the chief's decrees.

LXXIX.

But as he spake, he smiled; and in a way
So natural and unfeigned, that to his side
Another damsel, who had marked the play
Of his expressive face, drew near, and cried;
"Nay! for thy falchion choose no other bride
Than my commands, for on its aid my heart
Is set; nor think such love misplaced,—beside
By old consent my knight indeed thou art,
And e'en as such, we two must have some talk apart."

LXXX.

Withdrawn, she spoke: "I know thee well, Vafrine!
Me too thou needs must know;" the subtle Spy
Felt his heart fail him, but with lively mien
Her glance returned, and smiling made reply;
"Nay, gracious lady! ne'er before have I,
That I remember, seen your face, although
Its beauty asks the gaze of every eye
Fitly to praise it; this alone I know,
My name is much unlike the one which you bestow.

LXXXI.

"My mother bore me on Biserta's plains,
Her name Lesbina, mine is Almanzore:"
Quick she replied; "All that to thee pertains
I long have known, dissemble it no more;
Hold not thyself so secret, I implore;
I am thy friend, and for thy good would dare
No little risk,—Erminia I, of yore
A Queen's blest daughter and a King's rich heir,
Then good Prince Tancred's thrall, and subject to thy care.

LXXXII.

"Two blessed months thy captive I remained,
A reverenced nun in a delightful cell,
And in all courteous modes was entertained,—
The same, the same I am; behold me well!"
The squire failed not, when on her beauty fell
His closer gaze, to recognise the fair:
"All fears," she added, "from thy mind expel;
Fear not for me, thy life shall be my care;
By the bright sun in heaven, by heaven itself I swear!

LXXXIII.

"Nay, when thou partest, take me back, my friend,
To my dear prison—(pardon me the phrase);
For here in bitter liberty I spend
Whole restless nights and melancholy days;
And if perchance thou'rt lingering here to gaze
Upon our camp, and with ingenious brain
Pry through our plans, great cause hast thou to praise
Thy happy stars; for I will things explain,
Which else thy utmost skill had failed to ascertain."

LXXXIV.

Thus she: but, thoughtful of Armida's snares,
He silent stood, considering in his mind,
"Woman's a false and chattering thing,—she swears,
And will and will not, just as sits the wind;
Simple's the man, and credulous, and blind,
Who trusts a word she says;" at length he cried,
After long thought, "If thou'rt indeed inclined
To go, so be it; I will be thy guide;
Leave we the rest to wait a more convenient tide."

LXXXV.

And now the gongs and trumpets sound to horse,
And through the host an apt confusion reigns;
Vafrino leaves her tent, whilst she perforce
Rejoins her friends, awhile with them remains,
And in gay talk their idlesse entertains
With jocund praises of her new-made knight;
Then steals off slyly; mounts her palfrey; gains
The place prescribed, and with Vafrino light
O'er the wide champaign takes her unregarded flight.

LXXXVI.

When they had reached the desert, and in air
Beheld the distant towers of Gaza fade,
Vafrino begged the virgin to declare
What secret plot was against Godfrey laid:
She then the whole conspiracy displayed,
The treacherous web unwinding, fold by fold;
"Eight warriors are there of the court," she said,
"In this insidious bond of guilt enrolled,
Of whom the most renowned is Ormond, base as bold.

LXXXVII.

"These, whether moved by hatred or disdain,
Have thus conspired, and 't is their shrewd design,
When in pitched battle, or to lose or gain
These Asian realms, the two great armies join,
To bear upon their coats the Red-cross sign,
And armed like Franks commingle in the fight;
And as 't is known the guards of Godfrey shine
In *or* and *argent*, they themselves will dight
In the like foreign vests, emblazoning gold and white.

LXXXVIII.

"But all will wear some token on the crest,
Whereby their friends may know them for allies;
And when both armies lay their spears in rest,
And the war thickens and the tumults rise,
They will your Chief track out, and in the guise
Of guards with amicable zeal crowd round,
To pierce his bosom; if they strike, he dies;
For know, their swords with poison have been ground,
That death may be dealt out in every separate wound.

LXXXIX.

"And as their Chieftain learned from public fame
That none with surer skill could signify
Your arms and dress, he fixed on me to frame
Their feigned array, and forced me to comply.
This is the cause I leave the camp; I fly
The' imperious biddings which that Asp of Nile
Might further give; his trains of treachery
My heart abhors, nor ever shall such guile
Or masked deceit again my virgin heart defile.

XC.

"This is the cause, nor this alone,"—and here
She ceased, and, colouring to a rosy red,
Cast down her eyes, nor could Vafrino hear
Well the last words, which much she wished unsaid.
Solicitous to know what thoughts could shed
Such deep confusion o'er her cheek, he pressed
The virgin home,—"Of little faith!" he said,
"Why the true causes hide from one whose breast
Is, as thou know'st, of trust? blush not, but speak the rest."

XCI.

Her bosom heaved with a tumultuous swell,
And from her lips the trembling accents came
Abrupt and prefaced by a sigh; "Farewell
Ill-timed reserve and unavailing shame!
It is in vain—I am no more the same—
In vain concealed and close you strive to hide
Love's glowing fires beneath your specious flame!
Due were such scruples ere I stept aside;
But now a wandering maid, farewell the' imperfect pride!

XCII.

"My loss," she added, "on that night of grief,
When my poor country yielded to her foes,
Surpassed the' appearance; not that then my chief
Misfortune happened, but from thence it rose.
My sceptre lost, my realms subdued, were woes
Easy to bear, resigned with little cost;
But with my high estate, my heart's repose
Was also gone; ah me! what folly crost
My brain? then sense was wrecked, and peace for ever lost!

XCIII.

"Thou know'st, Vafrine, with what a trembling awe,
Seeing such slaughter and foul spoil, I sped
To thy kind lord and mine, when first I saw,
Armed in my halls the warrior fix his tread;
Thou know'st with what an agony of dread
His knees I grasped, and of his conquering glaive
Prayed strong protection; 'Mercy, Prince,' I said,
'I pray not for my life, but save, oh save
My virgin flower unstained; 't is all I come to crave!'

XCIV.

"He waited not to hear my finished plea,
But took my hand in his, and said, 'Arise!
Fear not, fair maiden! I myself will be
Thy sure defence; cloud not those charming eyes!'
Ah, then I felt, with a divine surprise,
I know not what strange sweetness seize my frame!
Which by degrees, in gratitude's disguise,
Securely creeping through my soul, became
Ere well I wist, a wound, a sickness, and a flame.

XCV.

"He visited me oft, he saw me grieve,
And with mild accents would my woes allay;
'Thy perfect liberty,' he said, 'receive;
Take back thy treasures, and be cheered, I pray.'
Ah, this was cruelty, not kindness! gay
I could not be, when, whilst he drew the dart,
He rudely snatched me from myself away;
These he restored to me, the cheaper part,
But in restoring played the tyrant o'er my heart.

XCVI.

"Love's hard to hide; with thee I oft apart
Asked of my lord in garden, hall, and grove;
Thou the strong workings of my mind and heart
Perceiving, saidst, 'Erminia, thou 'rt in love!'
This I denied—can maids do less? and strove
To dissipate the' idea; but my sighs
Too well sufficed the assertion to disprove;
And whilst my tongue was mute, perchance my eyes
Shone with the' impassioned warmth I studied to disguise.

XCVII.

"Unhappy silence! had I then but sought
The fitting medicine for my wounds, I ne'er
Had loosed my wishes on a fancy fraught
With no relief, nor fled I know not where.
I left him, hiding in my breast with care
The flame I nursed;—what tongue my pangs can paint?
For death alone I looked; till with despair
Love in my succour strove, and in the' attaint,
Loosed me from every tie of feminine restraint.

XCVIII.

"So that to seek my lord I went, that he
Might cure the lingering sickness he had made;
But on my moonbright way, I chanced to be,
By villains ambushed in the greenwood shade,
Chased and assaulted; scarce could I evade
Their savage grasp, so hotly they pursued;
To a lone cell at length my palfrey strayed,
And there I dwelt in genial solitude,
A simple shepherd-girl, a tenant of the wood.

XCIX.

"But when that fond desire which sore dismay
Had for awhile suppressed, revived again,
Daring the same adventure, on my way
The same misfortune met with me as then;
Nor could I now escape; for in the glen
The lurking freebooters were close at hand;
Thus was I chased and quickly seized,—the men
Were, I soon gathered, an Egyptian band,
Who straight for Gaza made, swift journeying o'er the sand.

C.

"They took me to their Chief, whose ear my prayer
And mournful story so completely gained,
That he mine honour did respect, and there
With kind Armida have I since remained.
Thus oft have I been harshly entertained;
Thus oft have I escaped; ah, see, Vafrine,
What scenes I have passed through, what ills sustained!
Yet free, yet captured oft as I have been,
Still my first chains I wear, preserved through every scene.

CI.

"Ah, let not him who round my soul entwined
The chains from which no power can set me free,
Let him not say, 'Go, vagrant maid, and find
Some other home, thou shalt not stay with me,'—
But kind and dear may my reception be!
'Take back,' Vafrino! to thy master say,
'This trembling dove, and treat her tenderly!'"
Thus spake the Princess; and thus, night and day,
They side by side rode on, and talked the time away.

CII.

The beaten road Vafrino left erewhile,
Seeking a shorter or securer way;
They reached at length, what time with farewell smile
The sun hung hovering o'er the landscape grey,
Near to the town, a vale of pine and bay;
Sprinkled with crimson was the green, and nigh,
Grovelling in blood, a lifeless warrior lay
Across the path; though dead, his Gorgon eye
Yet seemed to menace death, upstaring on the sky.

CIII.

The fashion of his arms and foreign mien
Spoke him a Pagan; on Vafrino sped,
And somewhat farther on the encircled green,
As to the right he chanced to turn his head,
Perceived a second: "This," he inly said,
"Must surely be a Christian, by the grain
Of his dark vest;" he sees the Cross of Red,
Leaps from his steed, the face discovers plain,
And, "O my God!" he cried, "here lies Prince Tancred slain."

CIV.

The pitying Princess had paused to gaze
On the grim form of the Circassian peer,
When that sad voice of anguish and amaze
Came like an arrow on her heart and ear;
At Tancred's name, she spurred like one whom fear
Or wine had rendered mad, her palfrey fleet;
And when she saw indeed the form so dear,
Pale, and wrapt round as with the winding-sheet
Of death, she stept not,—no, she darted from her seat!

CV.

And, with a bursting groan, a stormy shower
Of tears, low bending o'er the' unconscious knight,
"Fortune!" she cried, "in what ill-omened hour
Bring'st thou me here? O dire, O fatal sight!
Long wished, long sought for, is it in this plight
I find and view thee, oh my love! laced o'er
With wounds, and all unable to requite
With one kind look the bitter plaints I pour?
No sooner found again, than lost for evermore!

CVI.

"Ah! never did I dream that to these eyes
Thou could'st be aught, love, but a pleasing care!
Would they were dark, no more this blank disguise
Of thy dear face to mark, which ill they dare.
Where is its once expressive smile? ah where
The mildness beaming from the eye? the cheek's
Divine carnations, and the brow that bare
Itself so bravely?—not a feature speaks,—
Gone! beyond reach, alas, of groans, or tears, or shrieks!

CVII.

"But, though thus pale and dim, thou charm'st me still;
Fair soul! if yet thou light'st this seeming clay,
Yet hear'st my plaints, forgive my daring will
And too rash ardour the fond theft which they
Tempt me to take,—forgive me if I lay
To thine my virgin lips, and one cold kiss
Steal from the dull caresses of decay!
Warmer I looked for, but 't will be some bliss
To seize in death's despite, and die remembering this.

CVIII.

"Receive my soul, which flutters to be free,
And thither guide it where thine own is fled!"
Groaning she spoke, and weeping seemed to be
Apace dissolving with the tears she shed.
Bathed by this quickening balm, as from the dead,
The knight revived, and opened for a space
His languid lips,—dark slumber still o'erspread
His heavy eyes, but as she kissed his face,
One blending sigh from him repaid her blest embrace.

CIX.

A gleam of hope, at his reviving breath,
Cheered the sad maid: "Look up, dear love," she cried,
"On the last melancholy rites of death
Which I with pious tears and sighs provide!
Look on me, Tancred, a funereal bride,
Fain in companionship with thee to take
The long dark path and perish at thy side!
Fly not, fly not so soon, for pity's sake!
'T is the last boon I ask, the last request I make."

CX.

Tancred his eyes unclosed, and closed again,
Heavy and dim; and she renewed her plaint;
"This," said Vafrine, "soothes not the hero's pain,
First cure the wounded, then bewail the' attaint."
He strips him of his arms; Erminia, faint
And trembling, aids him as she can, applies
Her skilful hand, like a ministrant saint,
To search his wounds, and with experienced eyes,
Symptoms of hopeful show rejoicingly descries.

CXI.

By loss of blood and faintness she perceives
The trance is caused, and by the chill night wind;
But in this lonely wilderness of leaves
Nought save her veil occurs, his wounds to bind:
But Love romantic bandages can find,
And dictate arts of pity strange and sweet,—
For with her radiant tresses, disentwined,
She stanched the flowing blood, (divine conceit!)
And swathed the grisly wounds that so acutely beat;—

CXII.

Severing the tresses with his sword; for ill
Her thin short veil the' occasion could suffice;
Nor sage nor crocus, dittany nor dill
Found she at hand; but charms of equal price
She knew, she used, and from his weary eyes
That deadly sleep already shakes away;
Lightly he lifts them, and with glad surprise
Beholds his servant, and, in strange array,
The maid who o'er him hangs with such benign dismay

CXIII.

"How com'st thou here, Vafrino?" soft he said,
"And thou, my kind physician! who art thou?"
She wept, she blushed, rejoicing, rosy-red,
She sighed, she smiled, she felt she wist not how.
"Thou shalt know all, prince," she replied, "but now
(Thus thy physician bids) be still and rest;
Health shall return to thy bewildered brow,
Prepare the guerdon that shall make me blest;"
And then his head she placed upon her beauteous breast.

CXIV.

Vafrino mused how he might best, ere night,
Remove the warrior from the bosky glen,
When lo! a band of soldiers came in sight,
Whom soon he noted for Lord Tancred's men;
They on the tower were fighting round him, when
He met the fierce Circassian, blade to blade,
And in appeal of battle dared him; then
Bade not to follow, they the prince obeyed,
But anxious sought him now, so long the hero stayed.

CXV.

Numbers beside pursued the search, but these
Alone had the good chance their wish to gain;
Their arms they join, whereon with perfect ease
To all, the wounded hero they sustain:
"Shall then Argantes," said the knight, "remain,
Brave as he was, the prey of wild birds? no!
Leave not the hero; bear him from the plain;
His gallant relics shall not feed the crow,
Nor want such praise or tomb as Tancred can bestow

CXVI.

"I war not with the pale dumb corse,—he died
Bold as a lion on the hunter's spear;
Funereal rites 't is fit that we provide,
The last poor honours that can serve him here."
He said; his troops construct a simple bier,
And thus in solemn march behind him bear
His slaughtered foe; Vafrino in the rear,
His station takes beside the' enamoured fair,
And tends her o'er the downs with all a page's care.

CXVII.

"Not home," said Tancred, "to my wonted tent,
But bear, O bear me to the sacred Town!
That if cut short by human accident,
I there may lay my feverish being down:
Haply a spot of such revered renown
Where died the Lamb of God, may make my way
To heaven more easy; and 't will be the crown
Of all my toils, with life's declining ray,
Low at his worshipped shrine my pilgrim vows to pay!"

CXVIII.

He said, and thither was he borne, and laid
On a soft bed, and in a calm repose
Was soon entranced; Vafrino for the maid
A near apartment close and secret chose;
And, leaving her to cheer her amorous woes
With kindling hope's serene perspective, went
Where Godfrey sojourned, unforbid by those
Who there kept guard, though then in crowded tent
On the next stroke of war his dubious thoughts were bent.

CXIX.

Beside the bed whence Raymond scarce uprears
His yet enfeebled frame, the Duke was found;
By a brave garland of his noble peers
And of his wisest counsellors compassed round:
The Squire his tale begins, and a profound
Regard is marked on each beholder's mien;
None interrupts him: "Sire," he says, "renowned
Through the wide world! at thy desire I've been
Amidst the' Egyptian tents, and all their forces seen.

CXX.

"But fancy not that of the mighty host
The countless swarms can be by me ared;
I saw the hills, and plains, and valleys lost,
E'en as I looked, beneath their darkening tread;
I saw, where'er they came, where'er they spread,
Rich earth despoiled of all her grass and grain,
And the flood shrink in its exhausted bed;
Not Jordan's stream, nor Syria's wide champaign
Can e'er, methinks, suffice, such myriads to sustain.

CXXI.

"But of their horse and of their foot by far
The greater part are merely useless shows;
Troops that no signals use nor arts of war,
But at a distance fight with slings and bows;
Yet are there some choice warriors who compose
The Persian host, well mailed, with sword in hand,
And helmets on their heads; but chiefly those
Illustrious myrmidons my praise demand,
Who guard the' imperial flag, the king's Immortal Band.

CXXII.

"Immortal called, for when a soldier 's lost,
Its number not diminishes; the knight
Next in renown fills up the vacant post,
As though succeeding to his comrade's right;
The Captain, Emireno named, for might
In deeds of arms and wisdom in divan,
Has but few peers; his orders are, despite
Thy utmost phlegm, by all the arts he can,
Into a general fight to force thee or trepan.

CXXIII.

"Nor can the army its approach retard
Beyond the second day, for 't is on fire
To act—look well, Rinaldo, then to guard
Thy head, 'gainst which so many knights conspire:
The most renowned have whet their swords in ire,
And pledged their honour on the dreadful deed;
Whilst, yet the more to raise incensed desire,
Herself Armida promises in meed
Of him who or by guile or prowess shall succeed.

CXXIV.

"Chief of the warriors who have sworn thy death
Is Altamore, the king of Samarcand;
Adrastus too, whose realms are by the breath
Of young Aurora at her rising fanned;
As big and bold a giant as e'er spanned
A sword in battle; so unlike his kind,
His reins a monstrous elephant command;
And Tisapherne, to whom, of milder mind,
The sovereign palm of worth and prowess is assigned."

CXXV.

This heard, Rinaldo's soul was all ablaze,
His eyes with generous indignation fill,
He burns to rush amidst his foes, he lays
Hand on his sword, nor stands a moment still.
"This," said Vafrine, "is one impending ill,
But their chief plot, the crowning stroke of all,
Remains to be disclosed; their utmost skill
In arms, their guile, their hatred, and their gall,
Will be employed to work thine own determined fall."

CXXVI.

He then proceeded, part by part to' unveil
The latent risk, the meditated fraud,
The poisoned arms, devices, shirts of mail,
The vaunt, the promise, and designed reward.
Much was inquired, much answered; all applaud
The spy's quick genius and accomplished vow:
Silence ensued; until the chief, unawed
By the near danger, raised his tranquil brow,
And to Count Raymond said, "What counsel offerest thou?"

CXXVII.

"Not as was fixed," he said, "at rise of sun
To press our foes, but, more to their chagrin,
The tower so strictly to besiege, that none
May at his pleasure or pass out or in;
Meanwhile refresh our forces, which begin
To need the respite; strengthened thus with rest,
The last great battle we may hope to win;
But judge thyself at leisure if 't were best,
Boldly, or here at bay the battle to contest."

CXXVIII.

"But, above all things, of thyself besure
Take every care, as 't is through thee, they own.
Our armies conquer; who can else secure
The field, and Europe o'er the East enthrone?
And that the traitors may be clearly known,
Change the devices of thy guardian band;
So shall the villains for their crime atone,
Caught in the very scheme themselves have planned,
And thou be still preserved our armies to command."

CXXIX.

"As is thy wont," the pious Chief replied,
"Thy kind regard and wisdom dost thou show;
But what thou leav'st unfixed, I now decide—
We will march forth against the haughty foe.
Shall armies, recent from the overthrow
Of the proud East, from tower or rampart fight,
When too by such foul guile insulted? No!
Our well-proved swords the traitors shall requite
Both in the open field and all-beholding light!

CXXX.

"Neither the rumour of our conquered spoils
Shall they sustain; nor, when in frowns revealed,
The victor's aspect, or his arms; our toils
Are crowned; and in their fall our empire 's sealed:
The tower their last lorn confidence, shall yield,
Or, unrelieved of any, be possessed,
When the first engine to its walls is wheeled!"
Here ceased the high-souled Chief, for down the west
The glittering stars declined, and called them to their rest.

CANTO XX.

Stanza xcvii.

ARGUMENT.

THE host arrives, and with the Christian power
Joins in fell battle; Solyman disdains
To be cooped up in the blockaded tower,
And sallies out, to war upon the plains;
With him the king in blood his sabre stains;
Both fall by noble hands; the godlike boy
Soothes his forlorn Armida; daylight wanes,
But the flushed Croises all their foes destroy,
And to the long-sought shrine proceed with duteous joy.

I.

THE sun was risen, the dial's circling shade
Had the tenth hour of morn already passed,
When, as the Pagans on their tower surveyed
The plains, a gloom the' horizon overcast,
Dark as the cloud which at grey evening fast
Involves the silent world: and now they knew
It was indeed the Egyptian camp, at last
Come to their aid; such clouds of dust upflew,
And shut the heavens, and hills, and valleys from their view.

II.

Then from the citadel to heaven they raise
A general shout, a hoarse discordant cry,
Like that of cranes when now from wintry Thrace
The mustering swarms their busy pinions ply,
And through the clouds to a serener sky
In clangour scud before the freezing gale;
The long-wished succour lifts their ardour high,
So that already from their marble pale
Prompt is each hand to shoot, each glorying tongue to rail.

III.

The Franks, conjecturing whence this sudden glow
Of joy and fury had its impulse, hied
To a commanding station, whence the foe
In all his pomp of numbers was descried;
A generous ardour fires their hearts; they chide
The lingering hours, the war-cry they resound;
Whilst the flushed youth below, on every side,
With martial murmurs hem the Captain round;
And, "Bid, O bid," they cry, "the tuneful trumpet sound."

IV.

But till the morrow he denies their prayer,
And wisely tempers their audacious heat;
No flying skirmish will he wage, nor care
For an engagement short of full defeat.
"Anon, brave youths!" he answered; "but 't is meet
That with one day of respite you requite
Your recent labours; rest you, I entreat;
Perhaps this truce may in our foes excite
A rash contempt of us, presumptuous in their might."

V.

All stood prepared, and through the long, long night
Expectant, pined for morn's returning ray;
Ne'er did the blue sky shew so clear and bright,
As in the dawning of that noted day;
Aurora smiled, and seemed in her array
Of purple radiance with the sun to vie;
Her amethystine crown she shakes away,
All becomes gold; and, without film, the sky
On great and godlike deeds opes slow its glorious Eye.

VI.

Soon as he saw the golden morning spring,
Godfrey led forth his marshalled hosts: behind,
Care of the tower in which the Syrian king
Was cooped, to Raymond's prowess was assigned;
Who with his own Provençal knights combined
The numerous band of Christians late enrolled
In their deliverers' ranks, at Emmaus joined;
Nor these alone were left to guard the hold,
But a renowned brigade of Gascons brave and bold.

VII.

From the Chief's spirits, of his men admired,
The total host on victory presumes;
Heaven sends him grace; wherewith, like one inspired,
A nobler air and grandeur he assumes:
His face the rosy light of youth relumes,
Where imaged honour shines like dews in spring;
Glows his rich hauberk, dance his soldier plumes,
And, as his eye smiles, as his limbs take wing,
He in the sunshine looks like some celestial thing.

VIII.

But far he had not marched, ere in advance
The whole Egyptian army he descried;
He straight secured a hill which 't was his chance
To find outspread on his sinister side
And rear; this seized, upon the champaign, wide
In front, but narrow in the wings, his ranks
He spreads abroad; the foot, well fortified,
He forms his centre, and the centre flanks
With light-horse wings, composed of Flemings and of Franks.

IX.

In the left wing, to which the shelving hill,
Held by his guardian chivalry, declined,
He the two Roberts placed; to Baldwin's skill
And wise command the centre he assigned;
Himself the right wing held, where unconfined
The plains stretched out upon the beams of noon;
For there the' Egyptian, if he felt inclined,
Might, by the' advancing of his armed moon,
Hope with most sure success to' enclose the whole platoon.

X.

Here his own noble Lorrainers he fixed,
With many a choice and many a well-armed knight;
And with his archer-horsemen intermixt
Footmen well used amid their ranks to fight.
Last, of the' Adventurers, men of noble might,
And the culled flower of every Christian land,
He forms a squadron, stationed to the right
Somewhat apart, and to Rinaldo's hand
Commits the sacred charge of this illustrious band.

XI.

To whom the Duke: "On thy courageous mind
The final issues of the field depend;
Keep thou thy squadron close concealed behind
These spreading wings that to such length extend;
And when the Egyptian troops draw nigh to blend
In stubborn fight, assail them; give not ground,
But render vain the project they intend;
Which is, if I mistake not, to wheel round,
And turn the wings; be bold, and evermore renowned!"

XII.

Then on his steed he like the lightning flew
From horse to foot, from ranging band to band,
Flung up his vizor, gave his face to view,—
Lighten his eyes, and waves his armed hand;
He cheers the doubtful; with sublime demand
Confirms the ardent; to the bold recites
The vaunts they made, the wondrous feats they planned;
With praise of valour past the brave delights;
And these with views of gold, with honour those incites.

XIII.

At length he paused, where in a gallant line
Are ranged his best and noblest chevaliers;
And from a spot which favours the design,
Begins a speech which fires each soul that hears.
As when the frigid winter melts to tears,
From Alpine peaks, fed with dissolving snows,
The swift, smooth torrent sparklingly careers,
So full, so fluent, as his fancy glows,
From his persuasive lips the sounding period flows.

XIV.

"O my brave knights, of chivalry the flower!
My scourge, my tamers of the Orient! lo,
The final day; behold at length the hour
For which so warmly you were wont to glow!
Not without cause does Heaven its rebels shew
Drawn to one centre; not without high cause
Guides them to us; is not your every foe
Brought here, like stags into the lion's paws,
That you may end at once ten thousand mortal wars?

XV.

"In one, unnumbered victories will be wrought,
Nor shall the risk nor the fatigue be more;
Take not, O take not then a single thought
On the vast swarms that cloud the landscape o'er;
For, with themselves at discord, they deplore
Their ill conjunction; in their ranks e'en art
Confounds itself; and those who fight will gore
Themselves, or form by far the smaller part,
Thousands will want the room, and thousands more the heart!

XVI.

"Half the vast swarms you view, are naked slaves;
Men void of strength or skill, in helpless plight;
Called from the couch or field, from chains or caves,
And dragged to battle in their own despite:
E'en now, in terror of the coming fight,
Their drawn swords quiver, shake their shields; I see
The ensigns tremble in their hands! those light
Uncertain sounds are no sealed signs to me,—
Fear guides their wavering march; Death sounds their Lillalié!

XVII.

"That Chief, who, robed in gold and purple weed,
Ranges their bands, and seems so fierce to view,
The Moor and Arab in his chains may lead,
But never can resist such knights as you;
What, although wise, though prudent, will he do,
When his disordered troops in battle close?
Ill known he is, or only known to few;
Nor well his warriors, none by name he knows;
What can he do, brave souls, when thick the tumult grows

XVIII.

"But I am Captain of a chosen host,
We fight at once and conquer, side by side;
You serve from choice, and I the knowledge boast
Of each one's country, lineage, lands, and bride.
What noble sword can strike, what javelin glide,
That is to me unknown? yea, at a glance,
As the shaft passes, can I not decide
Whether the same of Ireland were or France,
And whose the sinewy arm that made the bowstring dance?

XIX.

"'T is no great thing I ask; let me but find
Each one considerate of his old renown;
Use but your wonted zeal, and keep in mind
Your honour, mine, and His who bore the crown
Of thorns on his pale forehead; go, strike down
His scornful foes, and on their cancelled creed
Stablish your conquest of the sacred town!
Enough, why argue? in your eyes I read
Victory already won,—the Sepulchre is freed!"

XX.

At the conclusion of this speech, a tire
Was seen to fall of clear and golden light,
Like a descending star or gliding fire
Shook from the blue skirts of a summer night,
Save that 't was far more beautiful and bright,—
A shower as from the sun's most lucid spring,
Wove to a garland glorious to the sight,
Which round his temples passed its golden ring;
And thus, as some divined, marked out their future king.

XXI.

Perchance, if tongue of mortal may aspire
To mortal sight Heaven's secrets to dispread,
A guardian Angel from the blissful quire,
With radiant wings involved his sacred head.
Whilst Godfrey thus his troops exhorting led,
And in these terms provoked their martial pride,
The' Egyptian Chief was not less active, fed
With equal hopes of victory, to ride
Amid his marshalled men, and cheer their souls untried.

XXII.

He led abroad his sumless squadrons, soon
As his keen eye discerned the' advancing Franks;
And lined, in form of an extensive moon,
With foot his centre, and with horse his flanks:
Himself the right commands, the left with thanks
The generous Altamore receives; between,
The central foot proud Muleasses ranks;
And in the midst, with anger in her mien,
Shines, like a glorious star, the beauteous Damascene.

XXIII.

With Tisaphernes and the' Immortal band,
Frowns on the right the savage King of Ind;
But on the left wing where the plains expand
In scope, for swift manœuvres well designed,
The Persian kings has Altamore combined
With those of Libya, and the two whose sway
Is o'er the burning sands where scarce a wind
Breaks the hot noon; and there, in grim array,
The slings, and bearded shafts, and twanging crossbows play.

XXIV.

Thus Emireno ranks his troops; with speed
Gallops from wing to wing, from van to rear;
Speaks by interpreters or not, as need
Requires; with praises mixes threats severe,
Pains with rewards, and with loud chiding, cheer;
To some he shouts; "Why now, my darlings! why
Your downcast faces? what is there to fear?
What can these do against your thousands? fie!
Our shouts, our very shades will make the cravens fly!"

XXV.

To some; "O yes! with that revengeful face
Come, and like vultures your lost spoils regain!"
To some, sad fancies clear as truth portrays,
And prints the' imagined picture on the brain:
Paints their lamenting country; paints the pain
Of their sad families; the moving pleas
They use; the hands they wring; the robes they strain;
"Think," he exclaims, "that on her bended knees
Your country speaks through me! ah, think her accents these!

XXVI.

"Guard well my laws; let not my blood descend
To bathe my mosques, or stain their golden spires;
The tombs and ashes of my dead, defend,
Save my chaste maids from their accurst desires.
Sad for their by-gone youth, to you my sires
Shew each his hoary and unshielded head
To you my women, mindful of your fires,
Bare their imploring breasts, with tears o'erspread,
Each mother points her babe, each wife her bridal bed!"

XXVII.

And to the rest; "Lo, Asia makes you here
The champions of her honour! claims from you
Upon these few base robbers a severe
And bitter vengeance, but most justly due!"
Thus he with various arguments anew
In various tongues each various nation charms
To the near war; but farewell words! adieu
Delay! the stirring trumpet sounds alarms;
Small grows the parting space; they grasp their angry arms.

XXVIII.

O, 't was a brave, a grand, and wondrous sight,
Ere front to front the marshalled hosts combined,
To mark how nobly in their ranks each knight
Burned to move on, and for the signal pined!
How the loose flags flew billowing on the wind;
How on ten thousand heads the feathers danced;
How robes, impresses, gems, and arms refined,
Of all rich colours, gold and steel, advanced
Before the flouted Sun, smiled, sparkled, flashed, and glanced!

XXIX.

Like a tall forest of dark pines depressed
Both armies shew, so thick the spears abound;
Drawn are the bows, the lances laid in rest,
Vibrate the darts, the glowing slings whirl round:
Each warring horse is on the wing to bound
Through the snuffed battle; to the greeting gales
Spreads his broad nostrils, paws the echoing ground,
His lord's raised fury whets and countervails,
Foams, prances, snorts, and neighs, and fire and smoke exhales.

XXX.

Horror itself in that fair scene looks gay,
And joy springs up e'en in the midst of fear;
Nor less the trumpet's organ-tones convey
Both bliss and terror to the gazer's ear.
But the Frank hosts, though less by far, appear
More brisk at heart and eager at the sight;
Their every trumpet with a note more clear
And ardent, sounds its prelude to the fight,
And their coat-armour glows with a diviner light.

XXXI.

The Christian trumpets first defiance sound,
The Pagan gongs take up the tuneful gage;
Kneel the rapt Franks, and kiss the sacred ground
With adoration and a holy rage;
Then forward spring to war; the spacious stage
'Twixt the two hosts decreases—disappears
Beneath their rushing charge; they meet—engage—
Shock the four wings; each gallant footman hears
The clang—they bound abroad, and van with van coheres.

XXXII.

What Christian dealt the first auspicious wound?
Who could that guerdon of renown attain?
'T was thou, Gildippe! thou, who to the ground
Smot'st the stout king of Ormus, great Hircane;
So vast a glory did high Heaven ordain
To woman's hands! brave as he was in show,
She pierced his breast and broke the spear in twain;
Transfixed he fell, and falling, heard the foe
Raise a triumphant shout, and praise the glorious blow.

XXXIII.

Her lance thus snapt, she with her manly hand
Drew her good sword and on the Persians flew;
With frequent strokes, of their most serried band
Pierced the thick gloom, and let the sunlight through;
She cut forlorn Zopiro sheer in two,
E'en where the' adorning baldrick clasps the waist;
Then the fell savage grim Alarco slew,
Cleaving the porch of language and of taste;
Who from his charger fell, and spurned the sands he graced.

XXXIV.

A blow felled Artaxerxes, and a thrust
Argeo,—the one lay stunned, the other slain;
Then, smiting Ismael's wrist, she to the dust
Cast his left hand, which dropped the bridle rein;
The sword glanced hissing on the ears and mane
Of his proud-spirited and ardent bay,—
Which, startled by the sound, or stung with pain,
Checked by no curb, reared, turned, and plunged away
Through the whole Persian line, in dreadful disarray.

XXXV.

All these and numbers more, now lost to song,
She slew, or wounded; their disordered squares
The Persians close, and charge her in a throng,
Eager to win the precious arms she wears;
But now her faithful lord, who half despairs
For her endangered safety, light as wind
Flies to her succour, and his falchion bares;
And the blest pair, together thus combined,
In their united swords united vigour find.

XXXVI.

Arts of defence their generous souls are seen
To use, unpractised and unheard of yet;
He shelters her, she him; and in this keen
Dispute of love, themselves they quite forget;
The ardent heroine, though herself beset,
Beats off the weapons that her lord molest;
He to the spears which her dear person threat,
Is quick to raise his shield, and would be blest
No less, if need require, to' oppose his naked breast.

XXXVII.

Each to the other thus his cares transferred,
And each the other's wrongs revenged; his blade
Slew the presumptuous Artabane, whose word
The trembling isle of Böecan obeyed;
And lifeless stretched the haughty renegade,
Alvante, who with hand audacious strove
To smite his darling; she the debt repaid;
For at her lord as Arimantes drove,
His brows from eye to eye the' indignant heroine clove.

XXXVIII.

Such deeds they did, but greater was the wrack
Wrought by Prince Altamore; where'er he plied
His fearful sword, or spurred to the attack
His haughty steed, he slew or beat aside
Both horse and foot; thrice blest was he who died
At the first stroke, nor groaned beneath the tread
Of his fierce steed; for whom the homicide
Beat down, the cruel creature in his stead
Tore with its gnashing teeth, or proudly trampled dead.

XXXIX.

By the strong Prince's battle-axe were slain
Brunello sinewy and Ardonio great;
Of that the helm and head he clove in twain,
So that each shoulder dropped beneath its weight,
Ere fell the corse; but 't was Ardonio's fate
Through the quick spleen to be transfixed, where rise
The nerves whose strings with mirth the heart dilate;
So that (a strange and horrid sight!) he lies
Jocund with mortal pain, and loudly laughing dies.

XL.

Nor these alone from each delightful tie
Of life and love his murdering weapon tore,
But good Rosmondo and Gentonio, Guy
And Guasco, all lie weltering in their gore.
Who can relate what numbers Altamore
Beat down, what numbers bade the world farewell,
Crushed by his charger on the sandy floor;
The names of all the slaughtered who can tell,
How the brave warrior smote, or how the' assaulted fell!

XLI.

There lives not one who with the warrior now
Will break a spear, or meet him face to face;
Alone Gildippe braves him to his brow,
Nor in the battle to his arm gives place.
Never did Amazon, in stormy Thrace,
When red with blood the swift Thermodon ran,
Brandish her pole-axe or her shield embrace
Dauntless as she, when, issuant from the van,
She rushed to check the pride of this tremendous man.

XLII.

She smote him where with gold and rich aumaile
Gay on the helm flamed his barbaric crown;
And, shivering it to atoms, made him veil
His haughty head, and bow benignly down;
Well judged the monarch that no mean renown
Graced the bold arm that with such reckless might
Enforced its will, and, knitting to a frown
His swarthy brows, rushed forward to requite
Shame with incensed disdain, and with revenge despite.

XLIII.

And in an instant on her basnet served
The gentle Lady with a stroke so sore,
As to deprive her of all sense; unnerved,
Entranced she sunk—but her fond lord upbore,
And, were it their good Genius that watched o'er
Their forfeit lives, or magnanimity
In him, the check sufficed—he struck no more;
Like the mild lion, that with generous eye
Upon his prostrate foe just glares, and passes by.

XLIV.

Meanwhile Ormondo, to whose impious hands
The purposed treason was consigned, slipt in
With his false mates amid the Christian bands,
Eager to perpetrate the' unfinished sin;
Like midnight wolves, that smoothing their fierce grin
To a meek innocence, assume the guise
Of shepherds' dogs, the wattled sheepfolds win
Through the dusk mist, and there, with sparkling eyes,
Prowl round, their dubious tails upcurled betwixt their thighs.

XLV.

Mute they advance, and now with closed ventayle
The bloody Pagan draw to Godfrey's side;
But when, considerate of Vafrino's tale,
Their forged devices, white and gold, he spied;
"Lo, the masked villains! lo, my friends," he cried,
"The wretch that creeps with such a stealthy tread
In Frank disguisements near us! round their guide
See how his ruffians make to me!" this said,
He on the traitor rushed, and clove his helmed head.

XLVI.

For the confronted felon, quite amazed,
Nor struck, nor fenced, nor offered to be gone;
But e'en as though the Gorgon on him gazed,
Sate like an ancient warrior froze to stone:
On them all swords were drawn, all darts were thrown,
And to its last inevitable cane
Each quiver emptied was on them alone;
Thus fell, thus died Ormondo and his train,
To such small pieces cleft, their corpses scarce remain.

XLVII.

Godfrey, when once he saw himself imbrued
In Pagan blood, no longer stood at bay,
But quickly flew to where the Persian hewed
Through the thick squadrons his triumphant way;
So that his knights now fled in disarray,
Swift as the sands in Libya's drifting waste,
Before the stormy South; their sore dismay
He checked with shouts, rebuked their flying haste,
And, staying those that fled, assailed the Prince who chased.

XLVIII.

The two stern Chiefs a battle here began,
Such as was never in poetic page
Emblazed, the whilst on foot good Baldwin ran
With Muleasses elsewhere to engage;
Nor with less fervour, nor with less wild rage
Mix the bold horsemen on the left, where green
The sloping hills scoop out a spacious stage;
In person there, his two brave knights between,
Fights the barbaric Chief, high-minded Emirene.

XLIX.

With him the Norman Robert joins—they fight
With equal valour; but the *Fleming's* mail
The grim Adrastus bores and shatters quite,
And with sharp sabre cleaves his barred ventayle.
No certain foe has Tisapherne to' assail,
That in close battle can be termed his peer;
But on he scours, as with the driving gale,
Where most impassive the wedged ranks appear,
And all is hideous death before his winged career.

L.

Thus fought they long, and still their hope and cheer
In equal balance hung with doubt and dread;
With shattered mails, split shields, the shivered spear
And cloven helm, was all the field o'erspread;
In bosoms gashed or bowels gored, the red
Revenging sword lies buried deep, or bright
In thousand fragments glitters round the dead;
Some lie supine, some grovelling, and in spite
Seem still the hated earth ferociously to bite.

LI.

Beside his lord the charger lies outspread;
The comrade lifeless by his comrade lies;
Foe beside foe; the living on the dead;
And on the vanquished oft the victor dies:
No silent lull is there, nor formal cries,
But a hoarse, indistinct, unceasing sound—
Roarings of fury, threats of anger, sighs
Of languid Sorrow, wailing o'er his wound,
And groans and rising shrieks in faint low moanings drowned

LII.

The arms which lately wore so bright an air,
Discoloured now, and dull, and frightful show;
The steel has lost its sheen, the gold its glare,
Each sparkling colour takes the tint of woe:
Past is the pomp, the glory, and the glow
Of scimitar, and sash, and dancing plume;
Turban and gem alike are trampled low,
And dust lies thick upon the blood whose bloom
Outvied in dire display the purple of the loom.

LIII.

The Moors, the Ethiops, and the Arabs then,
To the dull discord of the atabal,
Spread out their dusky skirts of moving men,
And on the dexter wing revolving fall;
Already with their bows and slings they gall
The army from afar, when, like the din
Of earthquake and of thunder, at the call
Of young Rinaldo, his bold knights begin
With shouts their rushing march, and hem the' assailants in.

LIV.

The first he met was Asimire, who led
The Moors of Meröe, an illustrious name;
Rinaldo smote him where the swarthy head
Towers on the neck, and shore it from the frame;
And when this taste of victory and of fame
Had whet his angry appetite, the youth
So nobly bore him in the bloody game,
That to relate his deeds would be in sooth
To give mute wonder wing, and wed romance to truth.

LV.

More deaths than blows he deals, yet momently
His falchion smites: and as the angry snake
Seems in its single tongue to vibrate three,
With such a fearful swiftness does it shake,
So in dismay these charged barbarians take
The single sword which furiously the knight
Whirls round, for three; its rapid motions make
The first illusion to the trusting sight,
And awe the portent seals in superstitious fright.

LVI.

Down, down to Tophet, fast the Negro kings
And Ethiopic tyrants bleeding go;
Each gallant comrade in his footstep springs,
Upon the rest—with rival zeal they glow:
The Pagan multitudes to earth they mow
With terrible contempt; and these prepare
No vain defence, but die without a blow:
A massacre it is, no conflict, where
They yield up here their swords, present their bosoms there.

LVII.

Yet long they stand not to receive their wounds
In noble parts, but scour away—away;
Fear spurs them on, despair their ranks confounds,
Lost is all art, relaxed their fair array;
But the flushed hero still pursues his prey,
Strikes down their standards, breaks their strong crossbows,
Till spent in utter route their powers decay;
He then returns, for on defenceless foes
His fiery soul relents, his zeal less fiercely glows.

LVIII.

As the strong wind tenfold its rage augments
When hills or sturdy woods its blasts oppose,
But o'er the ample plain at once relents,
And in soft murmurs more serenely blows,—
As on the rock the dashing ocean throws
Its rough, its roaring billows, and boils high,
But in the open main more gently flows,
Rinaldo so, thus unopposed, lays by
Much of his noble rage, and calms his angry eye.

LIX.

Then, on the backs of this defenceless force
Scorning to spend his generous wrath in vain,
He to the infantry directs his course,
Late flanked by Asimire and Artabane,
Arab and dusky African; now plain
It stood and naked, for the tribes that well
Might have defenced it, were dispersed or slain;
Crosswise he came, and on their flank, in selle,
With all his men-at-arms in sworded fury fell.

LX.

He snapt their bristling spears, the ranks they form
He clove in twain, and in their pierced array
Plunged, beating down their troops; the windy storm
Whirls the reaped harvests with less ease away.
On every side around him does he lay
A bloody pavement, pebbled thick with lance,
Shield, and lopt limb; along whose broad highway,
The following horse, for Palestine and France,
Uncurbed, with battering hoofs in gorgeous frenzy prance.

LXI.

The Hero came where his forlorn Armide
In warlike pomp stood in her golden car,
Girt by a noble band, who for the meed
Of her sweet smile escort her through the war;
He by his armour known whilst yet afar,
Was viewed by her with eyes which from desire
And passion trembled like a sparkling star;
He changed but slightly; she, 'twixt love and ire,
From red to deadly pale, from frost to flushing fire.

LXII.

The Knight declined the chariot of the dame,
And like a man that would elsewhere bestow
His thoughts, passed on; but her sworn knights for shame
Let not their rival scape without a blow;
One drew his crooked sabre, one couched low
His lance, his arbalist another bent;
Herself an arrow planted in her bow,
Scorn strung her hand, and nerved her fierce intent,
But love the mood appeased, nor yet the shaft was sent.

LXIII.

Love against anger rose, and their dispute
Proved that her flame still glowed, though hid from view;
Three times her arms she stretched abroad to shoot,
Three times took aim, and thrice her aim withdrew;
Disdain at length prevailed: again the yew
She with an eager and unshrinking arm
Bent, and the bowstring twanged; the shaft outflew,—
Out flew the shaft, but with the shaft this charm
She the next moment breathed; "God grant it do no harm!"

LXIV.

She would have bade the weapon turn again,
And smite the heart whose sternness she resents;
O, well indeed she must have loved him, when
In hate's last pass her soul so soon relents!
But straight again her fondness she repents,
Straight to her stormy heart fresh furies rise;
Thus she the shaft now joys in, now laments,
She will, she will not it should smite, and eyes
With a tumultuous heart the arrow as it flies.

LXV.

Not quite in vain was it discharged; the reed
Smote the young knight's hard coat of mail, too hard
In fact, for female weapons to succeed,—
The steel, instead of piercing it, was jarred
Itself to shivers, nor the silver marred;
He turned away,—she thought in scorn, and ground
Her teeth with anger at his disregard;
Ofttimes she shot, but still no entrance found
Her shafts, and while she shot, love dealt her wound on wound.

LXVI.

"What! is he then impassive, that he mocks
All hostile force!" she murmurs; "must he mail
His limbs in adamant like that which locks
His haughty spirit in its stubborn scale?
Against his heart nor glancing eyes prevail,
Nor weaponed knight, armed proof from top to toe;
Whilst I, alas! at all points foiled, bewail,
Armed or unarmed, alike or friend or foe,
My thousand arts despised, and droop my pennons low!

LXVII.

"Now what new art, what charm shall I essay;
In what new form can I myself present?
Wretch that I am, there is no hope! my day
Of rule is o'er, and all my forces spent!
My knights, where are they? 't is too evident
All power, all arms are weak to his; in vain
The spear is levelled, and the crossbow bent:"
Thus she repined; for now throughout the plain
She saw her champions pierced, beat down, dispersed, or slain.

LXVIII.

Alone, she felt defenceless, stood in fear
To be enthralled or slain; nor can the aid
Of Dian or Minerva's arms—the spear
Or formidable bow, her heart persuade;
But as the delicate white swan, dismayed,
O'er which the eagle with fierce pounce impends,
Crouches to earth, and her broad wings displayed
Folds in mute terror,—to the storm she bends;
Just such her motions seem, just such wild looks she sends.

LXIX.

But brave Prince Altamore, whose might till now
Had held in check Gildippe, had upheld
The Persian flag when it began to bow,
And by his single arm the Franks repelled,
When in distress his Goddess he beheld,
Rushed, or flew rather from the near attack
To her; though honour at the step rebelled,
Him neither honour nor his host kept back;
So she but rescued be, the world may go to wrack!

LXX.

Round her ill-guarded car he planted spears,
And hewed an area with his falchion bright;
But meanwhile Godfrey and Rinaldo fierce
With dreadful slaughter put his troops to flight;
The hapless chief beheld their desperate plight,
And bore himself far better at the ken
As a fond lover than a warrior knight;
He placed in safety the fair Queen, and then
Returned untimely back to aid his vanquished men.

LXXI.

It was too late! those troops, like hunted deer,
Were gone beyond recal; no hope remained:
But on the left, the Christians with like fear
Fled from the Infidels, whose swords they stained;
One princely Robert scarce the ranks regained,
Wounded severely in the breast and face;
And one by grim Adrastus was constrained
To yield his sword; an almost equal pace
Both warring hosts thus kept in glory and disgrace.

LXXII.

A moment Godfrey takes to reunite
His straggling files, and then without delay
Renews the charge; and thus in stubborn fight
Wings shock with wings in terrible array,
Victor with victor; from their late assay
Tinged comes each soldier to the strife, in sheen
Of spoils from foes torn vauntingly away;
Victory and honour from all parts convene;
And Mars and dubious Fate unsmiling stand between.

LXXIII.

Whilst thus in furious rivalry of power
The Franks and Pagans stubbornly engage,
The fiery Soldan mounts the lofty tower,
And sees, though far remote, the war they wage;
As on a theatre's illumined stage,
The sad sharp tragedy of human state
He sees,—their hot assaults of grief and rage,
The savage stabs of gladiatorial hate,
And all the thousand turns and accidents of fate.

LXXIV.

Awhile astonished and amazed he stood,
At the first view; but soon, a sharp desire
To ply his sabre in that field of blood
And high achievement, set his soul on fire;
No dull delay can his revengeful ire
Indulge; already armed in panoply
Of proof, he snatched the helmet from his squire;
And, "Up, pine here no longer!" was his cry;
"This hour it fits us all to conquer or to die!"

LXXV.

Whether it were that providence divine
This furious spirit breathed in him, to close
That day in one bold stroke for Palestine,
His last lorn glories and her own long woes;
Or that, as Death drew near, the impulse rose,
In pure despite of his declining star,
Boldly to brave him midst a host of foes,
Rapid as rash, he bade the gates unbar,
And in his awful hand bore out unlooked-for war.

LXXVI.

He waits not, he, to notice if his knights
Obey the call, but rushes out alone;
Singly a thousand foes he dares, and slights
Their thousand swords, impassive in his own;
But by his spirit and audacious tone
Inspired, the rest like bacchanals pursue,
And Aladine himself, who on his throne
Was timorous, mean, and base, now reckless grew,
And, less from hope than rage, outrushed, loud shouting too.

LXXVII.

Upon the first he met the' atrocious Turk
His dreadful strokes discharged with such disdain,
And sped so swiftly in his murderous work,
That dead they fall, ere you perceive them slain;
Quick from the foremost to the last in train—
Voice after voice—the panic of affright
Speeds with the' alarming news, despatched in vain;
So that the native Christians on the right,
By the loud tumult scared, at once disperse in flight.

LXXVIII.

But with far less discomfit and dismay
The Gascon chivalry maintain their ground,
Although at unawares their mailed array
Was charged, as nearest for the falchion found;
Never did savage vulture, heaven's wing'd hound,
Nor Alpine wolf, the wood's ferocious lord,
With tooth or talon so acutely wound
Wild-fowl or flock, as the mad Soldan's sword,
Strained in his angry grasp, the Red-cross champions gored.

LXXIX.

Hungry and ravenous, like a living thing,
It seemed to crash their limbs and drink their blood;
With him the Pagans and their hoary king
Struck down and slaughtered, in their desperate mood,
The still-confused besiegers; but the good
Count Raymond rushed to where the Soldan slew
His faithful knights: he fled not, but withstood,
Though well again the red right-hand he knew,
Whose power his anguished frame had still such cause to rue.

LXXX.

Again he fronts him, smites him, falls again,
Struck as before above his closed ventayle;
The boisterous charge if he could ill sustain,
His old age only bear the blame, too frail
To bide such shocks; this time too, o'er his pale
Mute form a hundred spears and sabres play,
All eager these to guard as those to' assail;
But the grim Soldan still holds on his way,
Deeming the warrior dead, or else an easy prey.

LXXXI.

Upon the rest he falls, dismembers, maims,
Acts utter wonders on that narrow stage,
Then seeks, by lust allured to loftier aims,
A new arena for his boundless rage.
As one invited by some gentle page
To a brave banquet, from his thrifty board
Hies with delight his hunger to assuage;
So to a field with ampler victims stored,
Speeds he, on nobler food to flesh his ravenous sword.

LXXXII.

Down through the shattered ramparts he descends,
And with all speed to the grand battle goes,
Leaving disdain and fury with his friends,
And doubt and fear amid his scattered foes;
These a dire struggle still maintain, and those
Wax bold, the' unfinished victory to complete;
These yet resist, but their resistance shews
Far fewer signs of triumph than defeat,
And now they quite give way in undisguised retreat.

LXXXIII.

The Gascons slowly face to face give ground,
But the faint Syrians headlong haste away;
Meanwhile the shout of triumph, the known sound
Of arms, and clamour of the wild affray,
Reached the near spot where wounded Tancred lay;
Weak as he was, he rose from bed, went out
Upon the roof, and saw with sore dismay
The good Count felled, and all his spearmen stout,
Some in forlorn retreat, and some in utter rout.

LXXXIV.

Courage, which never fails the brave, although
The body droops, droops not, but like a charm,
In lieu of blood and spirits strengthens so
His limbs, that inly fortified from harm,
He binds the ample shield upon his arm,
Nor deems the burden grievous; grasps his blade,—
His blade unsheathed upon the first alarm,
And thus with weapons instantly arrayed,
(All that a brave man needs), no longer there he stayed.

LXXXV.

But issuing, loudly to the troops he calls,
"What! do you fly, and leave your lord a prey
To these barbarians? shall their mosques and halls
His arms as trophies of your guilt display?
Go then, return to Gascony, and say,
Say to his son, that from the glorious game
Where his loved father died, you ran away!"
This said, his weak and naked breast became
To thousand vigorous knights their shelter, and their shame.

LXXXVI.

And with his ponderous shield which seven bull-hides
Composed, a rough material, underlined
With strong impassive plates of steel besides,
By the pure alchemy of fire refined,
From swords, and shafts, and arms of every kind,
That like a drizzly shower around him played,
He guarded the good Raymond, and consigned
To death such numbers with his brandished blade,
That safe the warrior lay as in a silent shade.

LXXXVII.

The brave old Earl, protected thus, respires,
Awakes, and rises in a little space;
Whilst a deep feeling of the insult fires
His heart with anger, and with shame his face;
He darts his quick bright eyes in every place,
On every side, to spy the man whose might
Had on his crest inflicted such disgrace;
But not perceiving him, he turns with spite
Upon his following troops, the outrage to requite.

LXXXVIII.

Back to revenge alike their Chief's attaint
The flying Gascons the next instant pour;
And now the late so daring crew turns faint,
And boldness reigns where all was fear before.
He yields who smote, he slays who late forbore
To smite; he flies, who lately led the chase;
Well now did Raymond act the matador,
And with a right good earnestness efface,
By full twice fifty deaths, his own most brief disgrace.

LXXXIX.

Whilst striving thus to clear his shamed renown
Upon the most distinguished crests, he spies
Amidst his fighting chivalry, the crown
Of all their strength, and at the Tyrant flies;
On his helmed head his battle-axe he plies
With a strong arm; nor from his strokes refrained,
Till with a horrid symphony of sighs
And angry groans the monarch fell, constrained,
And, dying, bit the ground o'er which he lately reigned.

XC.

Their Chiefs thus absent one, and one destroyed,
Divided fates the sad survivors sway;
Some to distraction by despair annoyed,
Like maddening lions, or wild bulls at bay,
A moment fight, then throw their lives away
On the sword's point; whilst some bewildered run
Back to the tower; but with their flying prey
The victors enter too, opposed by none,
And raise their loud huzzas,—the last strong tower is won!

XCI.

Won is the tower, and on the lofty stairs,
Or in the very gates the Moslem fall;
But Raymond in his grasp ascending bears
The Red-cross flag and plants it on the wall
In sight of either host, a sign to all
Of victory, billowing to the charmed wind;
But this glad token of the country's thrall
The Soldan marked not,—his tempestuous mind
Had left the' assaulted tower and tumult far behind.

XCII.

He treads the moist vermilion field, which grows
With blood and carnage momently more red;
So that it seems the Court where Death bestows
His bannered spoils, and stalks with haughty tread,
Numbering his victims; as he turns his head,
He sees a warhorse which without its knight
From the thick press with dangling bridle fled;
On this he lays his ardent hand, leaps light
Into the vacant seat, and spurs it to the fight.

XCIII.

Glorious and potent is the aid, but short,
Which to the faint, sad Saracen he gives;
A bright, brief thunderbolt—that, swift as thought,
Unlooked-for flashes as the cloud it cleaves,
But of its momentary transit leaves
Eternal furrows ploughed in marble stone;
Twice fifty warriors he of life bereaves,
But two in Memory's picturing glass alone
Has Time's admiring hand to weeping Pity shewn.

XCIV.

O Edward! O Gildippe! your harsh fate
And noble prowess (if my Tuscan rhymes
May be so happy), will I consecrate
To the fond praises of all lands and climes;
That so the world, with all its storied crimes,
Your faith, your love, your virtue may revere,
And cite as models for the best of times;
And that some eyes, to love and feeling dear,
May grace, in solemn verse, your story with a tear.

XCV.

The generous Lady, nobly barbed and mailed,
Rushed where such throngs beneath his sabre died:
And with two mighty blows the Turk assailed,
One clove his buckler, and one ploughed his side;
The ruffian knew her by her vests, and cried;
"Lo, the white harlot! now by blest Mahound,
It had for thee been better to have plied
The needle still in England, unrenowned,
Than thus with sword and slave to flaunt on foreign ground!"

XCVI.

He said; and, filled with all a demon's ire,
At the brave dame a sweeping blow addressed,
Which struck—how could it dare?—her bright attire,
Shattered her mail, and pierced the beauteous breast
Which love meant only for a tenderer guest;
She drops the reins, and, fainting with the weight
Of pain, seems sinking to her last long rest;
Poor Edward sees, and if he comes too late
For her defence, alas, 'tis not his fault, but fate!

XCVII.

What should he do? within his breast at strife
Were rage and pity, with distracting smart
Urging him, this to aid his drooping wife,
And that to stab the murderer to the heart;
Whilst Love, lamenting Love, with both took part,
Nor would that this or that should plead in vain;
Love taught him modes beyond the reach of art,—
With his left hand would he his dear sustain,
And with the right discharge his vengeance and disdain.

XCVIII.

But power was wanting to his will; too weak,
Alas, were they, against so strong a foe!
He neither his fair love could aid, nor wreak
On the fell homicide the wrath which woe
Brought to his heart; ere he could strike a blow,
His guardian arm the savage Infidel
Smote off, and, forced thus harshly to forego
His fond embrace, with her he drooped, he fell,
And falling pressed the form he loved through life so well.

XCIX.

As the tall elm to whose sustaining stem
With all her tendrils clings the bridal vine,
If storms uproot or axe to death condemn,
Drags with itself to ground his darling bine—
Shattering himself the garlands that enshrine
His mossy boughs, and crushing as he lies
Her pleasant grapes to over-early wine,
He seems to mourn his own sad sacrifice
Less than the faithful plant's that round his ruins dies.

C.

So falls the knight; and grieves for her alone
Whom Heaven ordains to be for ever his;
Fain would they speak, if only to bemoan
Each other's pangs, but death denies them this:
They commune but with sighs, yet still 't is bliss
To view each other as in times gone by;
Long as they can they gaze, embrace, and kiss:
At once their pulses cease, at once they die,
And hand in hand to God their pious spirits fly.

CI.

Fame, spreading quick her pinions for the flight,
Tells with her thousand tongues the tale to all;
Not from vague rumour only, but a knight
Of special trust, Rinaldo learns their fall;
At once love, pity, grief, and duty call
On his resentment for revenge, he flies
To his proud foe; but here, to whet his gall,
The grim Adrastus crosses him, and cries,
Whilst with his brandished blade the hero he defies:—

CII.

"Ho! by sure tokens thou the man must be
For whose presented sword I burn and pine;
All day by title have I called on thee,
And looked mid thousand shields in vain for thine;
Now will I pay my vows, now at the shrine
Of the sweet saint for whose regards I die,
Offer thy heart up; come! for Palestine,
Our valour, yea, our fury let us try;
Thou art Armida's foe, her sworn avenger I!"

CIII.

This said, with two tremendous blows he signed
His throat and temples gemmed with gold aumaile;
The helmet he clove not (too well refined),
But to the pommel made the hero veil
His plumes; ah then, nor steel nor snaky scale
Helps the huge king; Rinaldo wounds him so,
He needs no further leech; wail, Indra, wail
For thy gigantic son! a single blow
Stills his insulting tongue, and lays his proud hopes low.

CIV.

With horror, awe, amazement, and affright,
Cold waxed the hearts of the surrounding crew;
E'en Solyman, who saw the wondrous sight,
Changed in his cheer, and inly trembled too:
And pale his ruby cheek, and nerveless grew
His arm, whilst, prescient of his coming doom,
He knows not what to think or what to do,
A thing in him unusual; but for whom
Do the stern Fates reverse the issues of their loom?

CV.

As when in his brief sleep distressful dreams
Afflict the sick man or the madman's brain,
He strives all eagerly to move, and seems
With more than giant force his limbs to strain,
Whilst not a muscle aids his will; in vain
Are all the mighty efforts he can use;
Still as the dead his hands and feet remain;
He would shout out or scream at what he views;
But not a shout, or scream, or syllable ensues.

CVI.

So would the Soldan rush the knight to meet,
And musters all his forces for the fight,
But feels not in himself his wonted heat,
Scarce knows himself in his diminished might;
What sparks of ardour his desires excite,
A secret terror chills: yet still desire,
Pride, love of glory, anguish, and despite,
And busy memory in his heart conspire,
So that he neither thinks to fly nor to retire.

CVII.

Whilst unresolved he stands, the knight arrives,
It seems to him with an Immortal's pace,
And with a wrath, a grandeur, that deprives
All mortal wrath and grandeur of their grace;
Small while he fights: yet, dying, no disgrace
Stains his long glory; to the last his eye
Glows with the memory of his state and race;
He shunned no strokes, he heaved no groan or sigh,
Nor did a single thing but what was great and high.

CVIII.

When now the Turk, who in that long crusade
Oft like Antæus fell, to rise again
Each time more fierce and strong, at length had played
His final part, and slumbered with the slain;
Fortune, who fluctuates like the' unstable main,
Hearing the rumour, durst no longer hold
The victory in suspense, but o'er the plain
Stayed her swift wheel, her errant course controlled,
And under Godfrey's flag her influences enrolled.

CIX.

Soon with the rest the kingly squadron flies,
The nerve and flower of all the East, whose name
Was once the' Immortal! mortal now, it lies
Gored with a slaughter fatal to its fame;
But Emireno, seized with generous shame,
Cuts short the standard-bearer's flight, and loud
With indignation sharply makes exclaim:
"Art thou not he whom from a countless crowd
I chose to bear the flag that ne'er in battle bowed?

CX.

"Stop! 't was not given thee thus to bear away
From Saracen and Frank, from sword and spear;
Canst thou then, craven, see thy chief a prey
To the stern foe, and leave him lonely here?
What seek'st thou? safety? change thy mad career,
The road thou takest leads to death! be true
To the borne Crescent, and renounce thy fear;
He fights who wishes here to live; come, woo
Honour with me, thy prince; her path is safety's too!"

CXI.

Blushing the knight obeyed; with far more stern
And sharp rebukes the other he addressed;
These threats, these blows, that terror makes to turn,
The chief's sharp sabre glittering at his breast;
And rallying thus his bravest and his best,
Fresh wings he forms, and, as the trumpets sound,
Still with fair hopes; his heart above the rest
Bold Tisaphernes cheers, who, though hemmed round,
Fights like a lion yet, nor yields an inch of ground.

CXII.

Wonders that day good Tisaphernes wrought—
The Normans in his wrath he overthrew;
Scourged the stout Flemings, and, as still he fought,
Young Gernier, Gerard, and De Rosel slew;
And when by deeds of so divine a hue
He to the measure of eternal fame
His brief existence had prolonged, he flew
At the sublimest risk of all the game,
Like one to whose concern life laid no further claim.

CXIII.

He spied Rinaldo, and though now his shield
Had changed its tincture to a tricolór,
Though the pearl eagle in its sapphire field
With ruby beak and wings was seen to soar.
Known was the proud emblazonry it bore;
"And lo!" he cried, "the dragon of the fight!
Heaven nerve my arm to do the deed I swore;
Let but my blade Armida's wrongs requite;
Thine, good Mahmoud, shall be the trophies of the knight!"

CXIV.

Thus prayed the Persian, but his prayers were vain,
Mahmoud heard not upon his couch of fire;
But as a lion, bristling up his mane,
With lashing tail provokes his native ire,
So on the whetstone of his wild desire
His scorn he sharpens, whets his eager zeal,
And, mustering all his strength up for the dire
Assault, coil'd safe behind his shield, his steel
He lifts—and bounds the barb beneath his angry heel.

CXV.

Rinaldo saw him with his sabre raised,
And rushed to meet him in as swift career;
Far fell the near assailants back, and gazed
On the stern scene, with mingled awe and fear.
Such was the might and fame of either peer,
Such strokes resounded when their weapons crossed,
That each his own strong cause for grief or cheer,
And the whole host of passions that engrossed
His soul—at once forgot, in breathless wonder lost.

CXVI.

That struck alone; this struck, and wounded, blest
With greater strength and arms more sure and sound;
With cloven shield, pierced helm, and shattered crest,
The Persian's noble blood distains the ground:
The fair Enchantress sees her champion's wound,
Sees his pierced armour, his half-helmless head,
And, worse, his failing prowess; gazing round,
She finds the rest disheartened, slain, or fled,
And her own safety hang on fortune's slenderest thread.

CXVII.

Late girt by thousand warriors in the strife,
She now stands lonely in her rubied wain;
Desperate of victory as revenge, her life
She holds in hate, she dreads the victor's chain,
And straight, 'twixt terror, fury, and disdain,
Her chariot quitting on a palfrey near
Springs, and takes instant flight,—her only train
Scorn and unconquered love, that in her rear
Hang like two eager hounds behind a hunted deer.

CXVIII.

So in sharp battle fled alone of yore
Scared Cleopatra, leaving to the blade
Of fortunate Augustus, midst the roar
Of waves and weapons, her fond knight betrayed:
And e'en as he, by tenderness o'erswayed,
False to himself and to the world he wooed,
Followed her solitary sails displayed,
So the fond Persian would have fain pursued
His pearl of beauty too, but this the foe withstood.

CXIX.

To the sad Pagan, when his love was lost,
Day seemed to darken and the sunshine fled,
And to the knight who thus his wishes crossed,
He turned enraged, and smote his helmed head;
More lightly falls to fabricate the red
And writhen thunderbolts, at Jove's behest,
Bronte's vast hammer; well the weapon sped,—
Its ponderous stroke alighting on his crest,
Made the knight's head bow down benignly to his breast.

CXX.

But soon recovering, in his seat erect
Rinaldo rose, and with his whirling sword
Clove the fine hauberk, 'twixt the ribs direct
Plunged the sharp steel, which in its wrath explored
So deep a passage to the heart it gored,
That far beyond life's citadel it went;
Entering the breast, the Pagan's back it bored,—
The steel drawn forth, supplied a double vent,
Through which the noble soul took straight its wing'd ascent.

CXXI.

The conqueror paused to contemplate where next
He should his falchion ply, where render aid,—
His foes in all their movements were perplexed,
Their colours struck, and scarce a spear displayed:
Here then his terrible career he stayed,
Curbed in his courser, to the sheath resigned
His sword, his martial ecstacy allayed,
And, calming every passion, called to mind
Armida's helpless plight and destinies unkind.

CXXII.

Her flight he well observed; mild pity now
Called for his courtesy and gracious cheer,
And the remembrance of his parting vow
To stand her firm and faithful chevalier,
Came o'er his mind, with feelings sweet and dear;
So that he followed where the dinted ground
Betrayed her goaded palfrey's swift career:
She the meanwhile a dreary glen had found,
Fit place for secret deaths, with cypress compassed round.

CXXIII.

Well pleased she was at heart, that chance should guide
Her wandering steps to so retired a place;
Here she alighted then, and cast aside
Her bow, her arrows, and their golden case:
"There lie," she murmured, "in your deep disgrace,
Unhappy arms! that from the war return
With scarce a spot your mistress to aggrace;
There buried lie, there rust amidst the fern,
Since to avenge my wrongs you've shewn such small concern!

CXXIV.

"Ah! midst so many weapons could not one
At least return with hostile crimson blest?
If other hearts to you seem marble, shun,
Spare not your points to pierce a woman's breast;
In this mine own, stript naked for the test,
Achieve your triumphs, and your fame restore;
Tender it is, Heaven knows, to wounds impressed
By Love's sharp arrows, Love—who evermore
Strikes wheresoe'er he aims, and hurts the sufferer sore.

CXXV.

"Shew yourselves sharp on me and strong; (your past
Degeneracy I pardon;) O poor heart!
Into what straights of fortune art thou cast,
When these alone can peace to thee impart;
But since no other solace to my smart
Remains, none other passport to repose,
Go to! the wounds of this consenting dart
Shall cure the wounds of love,—a few brief throes,
And death shall bring the balm that soothes all earthly woes!

CXXVI.

"Blest, if in dying I bear not with me
This my long plague to pester Hell's foul host;
Hence, Love! come only, dear Disdain, and be
The' eternal partner of my injured ghost!
Or, rising with it from the Stygian coast,
To the false wretch that did me such despite,
In such a whirlwind of resentment post,
With such grim shapes, that all his dreams by night
May be one ceaseless round of agonised affright!"

CXXVII.

She ceased; and, fixt in her intention, drew
The best and sharpest arrow from her case;
Rinaldo reached the wood, and caught a view
Of her mad gesture and disordered pace;
Saw her last act, and with how wild a grace
She to the fatal stroke her soul addressed;
Already death's pale hue o'erspread her face,
When, just in time her purpose to arrest,
The knight stept in behind, and saved her beauteous breast.

CXXVIII.

Armida turned; and saw, to her surprise,
The knight, for unperceived was his advance;
Shrieking, she snatched away her angry eyes
From his loved face, and sunk in Passion's trance;
She swooned, she sank, like a sweet flower by chance
Snapt half in two, that, with its bells abased,
Droops on its stem; he with distracted glance
Upheld her, falling, round her charming waist
Threw his sustaining arm, her clasping zone unbraced;

CXXIX.

And o'er her snowy breast and face deprived
Of life's warm hues, fond tears of pity shed;—
As by the summer morning's dew revived,
The fading rose resumes its native red,
So she, recovering, raised her drooping head
And cheek, revived by this celestial rain;
Thrice her unclosing eyes sought his, thrice fled
The bitter-sweet enchantment, nor again
Would she look up, but blushed 'twixt wrath and warm disdain;

CXXX.

And with her languid hand would have repelled
The nervous arm by which she was sustained;
Oft she essayed, but he the faster held,
The more she strove, the more she was enchained:
Yielding herself at length, like one constrained,
To that dear bond, for still perchance 't was dear,
Despite the scorn she shewed, the hate she feigned,
She sighing thus broke forth, whilst tear on tear
Gushed from the downcast eyes she did not, would not rear.

CXXXI.

"O! ever, parting and returning, ever
Cruel alike! what dark devices guide
Thy movements now? 't is strange thou shouldst endeavour
To save the life whose strings thou dost divide;
Thou seek to save me! to what scorn beside
Am I reserved? what modes of misery
Am I to suffer next? no! no! thy pride
And traitorous purpose well we know; but I
Am weak indeed, if e'er I want the power to die.

CXXXII.

"Thy honours truly must be incomplete,
If unsaluted; there must be displayed,
Chained to thy car, or suppliant at thy feet,
A dame, now seized by force, as first betrayed!
This be thy noblest boast: time was, I prayed
To thee for peace and life, now sweet would fate
Prove to my grief,—but ne'er, false renegade,
Kneel I to thee for it! there's not a state
Which, if it were thy gift, I should not hold in hate!

CXXXIII.

"Of myself, traitor! hope I to unloose,
Some way or other, this most wretched frame
From thy fierce tyranny; and if the noose,
Dagger, and drug, and precipice, and flame
Fail thy chained slave, by means as sure my aim,
Thank Heaven, I yet can compass, and defeat
No less thy malice than thy guile; forshame!
Cease thy base flatteries; cease thy false deceit;
How yet he strives with hope my sorrowing soul to cheat!"

CXXXIV.

Thus she laments; and with the floods of tears
Which love and scorn distil from her fair eyes,
A sympathising part his sorrow bears,
Where some chaste sparks of love and pity rise:
And with a voice sweet as the west wind's sighs,
He to her troubled heart speaks peace; "I crave
Thy grace, Armida! calm thyself," he cries;
"Not to be scorned, but crowned, thy life I save;
No foe, but still, yes still, thy champion, yea, thy slave!

CXXXV.

"Mark in my eyes, if you my words alone
Distrust, the fervour of my soul: I swear
Again to seat thee on thy father's throne,
And make thy comfort my peculiar care;
And O, would Heaven, auspicious to my prayer,
Chase from thy mind with its celestial flame
Those mists of Pagan darkness which impair
Its inward grace and beauty, not a dame
In the whole East should match thy glory, power, and fame!"

CXXXVI.

Thus does he soothe, thus sue to her; and so
Tempers his suit with tears, his tears with sighs,
That, like a virgin wreath of mountain snow
When zephyr breathes or sunshine warms the skies,
Her haughty scorn, that wore so stern a guise,
And all her cherished anger melt away,
And milder wishes in their room arise:
"Behold," she says, "thy handmaid; I obey:
Thy lips my future life, thy will my fortune sway!"

CXXXVII.

This while, the' Egyptian Captain in the strife
Sees his imperial standard fall to ground,
Sees too stout Rimedon deprived of life,
Despatched by Godfrey in a single wound;
And all his men, discomfited around,
Dead, or in flight across the boundless plain;
He in his last sharp act will not be found
Recreant like them, but seeks (nor seeks in vain),
Some noble hand by which he may be nobly slain.

CXXXVIII.

Spurring his steed, he against Godfrey rode,
No worthier foe he knew could be descried;
And wheresoe'er he passed or came to, shewed
The last brave tokens of despairing pride:
But ere he reached his foe, aloud he cried;
"Lo, Chief! I come to spend my final hour
And hopes with thee; but yet it shall be tried
If, overpowered, I too cannot o'erpower,
And on my conqueror fall, as falls a thundered tower!"

CXXXIX.

This said, they each at each indignant dashed;
With lifted swords at once they meet, they smite;
Broken the shield, the vantbrace cleft, and gashed
Is the left shoulder of the Christian knight:
He, on his part, discharged with matchless might
On the left cheek a blow that prostrate laid
The Pagan chief; and in bewildered plight
As to regain the saddle he essayed,
Through the abdomen thrust, his life-blood bathed the blade.

CXL.

Prince Emirene thus dead, but few remain
Of all that countless host; as he pursued
The vanquished, Godfrey saw, and checked his rein,
How Altamore on foot, in blood embrued,
With half a sword, and half a helm on, stood,
Breasting a hundred bristling spears, that poured
Round the doomed Prince, whose prowess still they rued;
"Cease, cease," he cried, "Sir Knights! and thou, brave lord,
Yield, ('t is Duke Godfrey speaks,) yield up thy useless sword!"

CXLI.

He, who had never till that hour abased
To any act like this his lofty soul,
When now he heard the name which heaven had graced
With such renown from Nubia to the pole,
Yielding his arms, replied; "To thy control
(For thou deserv'st the homage), I my knee
Submit; then midst thy other spoils enrol
The name of Altamoro, who will be
Neither in fame nor wealth a prize unworthy thee.

CXLII.

"The gold and gems of kingdoms shall my kind
And faithful lady grant for my release:"
"Heaven has endowed me with a nobler mind,"
Godfrey replied, "than to desire increase
Of earthly treasure; still retain in peace
All that from Ind or Persia swells thy store,
Bocharian mantle, and Tartarian fleece;
I set no price on life: on Asia's shore
I war in Europe's right, not trade in Asian ore!"

CXLIII.

This said, he gives him to his guards to tend,
And after those that fled, pursues amain;
These to the rampired camp their lives commend,
Yet thence small respite to their fate obtain;
Soon is it won; the trench is choked with slain,
From gay pavilion to pavilion glide
Streams of warm blood, with whose vermilion stain
Each sumptuous trophy of barbaric pride—
Plumes, corslets, turbans, helms, and shields are deeply dyed.

CXLIV.

Thus conquered Godfrey; and as yet there glowed
A flush of glory in the fulgent West,
To the freed City, the once loved abode
Of Christ, the pious Chief and armies pressed:
Armed as he was, and in his sanguine vest,
With all his knights in solemn cavalcade,
He reached the temple; there, supremely blest,
Hung up his arms, his bannered spoils displayed,
And at the sacred TOMB his vowed devotions paid."

L' ENVOI.

I.

FARE thee well, soul of sweet Romance! farewell,
Harp of the South! the stirring of whose strings
Has given, by power of their melodious spell,
Such pleasant speed to Time's else weary wings,
That, rapt in spirit to the Delphic cell,
Midst its green laurels and prophetic springs,
The tuneful labours of past years now seem
A brief indulgence—an enchanted dream.

II.

My pride at noon, my vision of the night,
My hope at morn, my joy at lonely eve!
Now that thy tones of magical delight
Are o'er, do I not well to droop, and grieve?
To what new region shall the muse take flight,
What pictures fashion, what fresh numbers weave,
When all that else had charmed, must now appear
Tame to the eye, and tuneless to the ear?

III.

Much shall I miss thee, when in calm repose
The Summer moon upon my casement shines;
Much, when the melancholy Autumn strows
With leaves, my walk beneath the' o'erarching pines:
Nor less when Spring, 'twixt shower and sunshine, throws
Abroad the sweet breath of her eglantines;
And Winter deepens, with his stormy din,
The quiet charm of the bright hearth within.

IV.

If with no vulgar aim, no selfish view,
I sought to give thy foreign chords a tongue,
Let not my hopes all pass like morning dew,
When on thy cypress bough again thou 'rt hung,*

* "Tu che ne vai in Pindo,
Ivi pende mia cetra ad un Cipresso,
Salutala in mio nome, e dille poi
Ch' io son dagli anni e da fortuna oppresso."

Rime del Tasso.

But sometimes whisper of me to the few
I love, the fond, the faithful, and the young;
And those who reverence the wrong'd soul that planned
Thy world of sound, with archangelic hand.

V.

Hear how the strings, dear IDA, sound abroad
The grief and glory of that matchless mind!
What ardour glows in each seraphic chord;
How deep a pathos Echo leaves behind!
Yet was he wretched whom all tongues applaud,—
For peace he panted, for affection pined:
Be thou, whilst thy mild eyes with pity swim,
More kind to me than AURA was to him;—

VI.

Else shall I little prize the' indulgent praise,
Which some may lavish on a task so long;
Else shall I mourn that e'er my early days
Were given to feeling, solitude, and song;
But thee no light capricious fancy sways,
To doubt thy truth would be the heavens to wrong;
Peace to thy spirit with the closing spell!
And thou, Hesperian Harp, farewell, farewell!

VII.

Thus went the verse: and thou art now to me,
All that the cherished Muses were of yore,
And, glassed in other eyes than thine, I see
Fair visions rise, but dimly traced before.
This peaceful home, this garden, where the bee
Hums of Hymettus, and these woods, have more
Of stirring music than those old day-dreams
Of airy fame and praised Pierian streams.

VIII.

To him who lives as Wisdom would require,
As Duty wooes, and as the Virtues claim,
Time, if it robs the Poet of his lyre,
Bestows a bliss beyond the wealth of fame,—
Fruits, that refresh the spirit, and inspire
The' immortal yearning, and that purer flame,
To quicken which, until they blend with heaven,
The mortal Poet and the Lyre were given.

FROXFIELD,
4th Month 16th, 1830.

$-\frac{\partial X}{\partial y X}$

RENEWALS 458-4574.

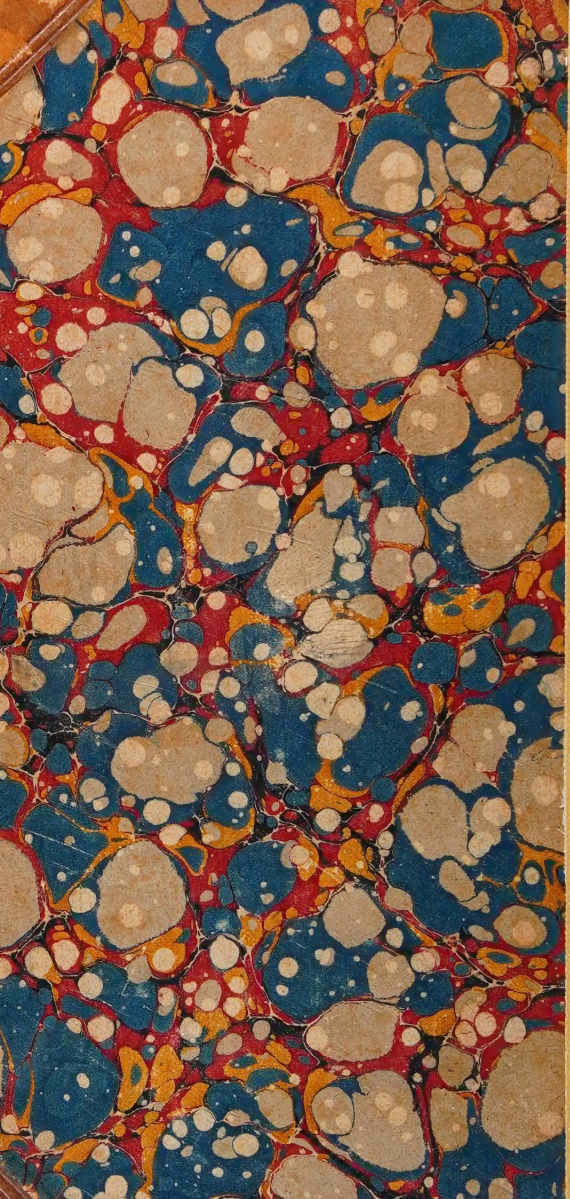
DATE DUE

APR 20			
MAY 12			
GAYLORD			PRINTED IN U.S.A.

C04446488

42
21

72

45633

Library
University of Texas
at San Antonio